

"We are realists... we dream the impossible" - Che



Fire This Time!

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@ChiefLadyBird

By Tamara Hansen

On July 1, 2019, many people across Canada gathered to celebrate the 152nd Canada Day. While many well-known Indigenous journalists, academics, and social media critics spent the day deconstructing the “Happy Canada Day” messaging of the government of Canada; few outside Indigenous circles paused to reflect on what it means to say “Happy Canada Day” in 2019. Remember, this is the same year the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls accused Canada of engaging in an ongoing genocide against Indigenous people.

“It is time to call it as it is: Canada’s past and current colonial policies, actions and inactions towards Indigenous Peoples is genocide. And genocide, as per law binding on Canada, demands accountability. The National Inquiry hopes that its legal analysis and findings will contribute to the necessary discussion on genocide in Canada and trigger further research on this characterization of colonial violence, which is a fundamental root cause of the violence experienced by Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people [Two-Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual].”

- “A Legal Analysis of Genocide” Supplementary Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Canada’s 152 Birthday:

WHY THE NATIONAL INQUIRY INTO MISSING & MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN & GIRLS IS CORRECT - CANADA’S TREATMENT OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IS AN ONGOING GENOCIDE

The National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (NIMMIWG) released its final report, “Reclaiming Power and Place” on June 3, 2019, along with several other documents including two supplementary reports, a first on Quebec and a second with a legal analysis of genocide. Also included was a separate document including their “Calls for Justice” which is a list of demands in order to begin to address the issues at stake for Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people with the goal of building towards real change.

While there are many mixed feelings about the process of the inquiry, the timeline of the inquiry, and the limited scope of the inquiry – what has gathered the attention of the mainstream media is not the stories of the hundreds of Indigenous women and girls that have been murdered or gone missing in Canada. Nor, it is the fact that today in Canada Indigenous women are six times more likely to be murdered than non-Indigenous women (Statistics Canada). Instead, widely-respected bourgeois news outlets across the country were falling over themselves to print editorial pieces about how “genocide” is the wrong term to use against modern-day Canada – in effect attempting to discredit the national inquiry’s work.

What is Genocide?

United Nations Definition from “the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide Article II” states:

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

a) *Killing members of*

the group;

b) *Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;*

c) *Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;*

d) *Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;*

e) *Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.*

Major Newspapers across Canada promote genocide-denial

Below are the titles of the articles published in the name of the full editorial boards of these national newspapers:

- The Saskatoon StarPhoenix & Regina Leader-Post Editorial Boards: “Distraction further dishonours victims” (June 7, 2019)
**Spoiler Alert: The use of the word “genocide” is the so-called ‘distraction’
- Toronto Star Editorial Board: “We need a new word: ‘genocide’ isn’t it” (June 6, 2019)
- Globe & Mail Editorial Board: “Is Canada committing genocide? That doesn’t add up” (June 6, 2019)

None of these articles study the definition of



Skylar (15) and her sister Aponi (12), whose mother is a 60s Scoop survivor, held signs during a rally for the National Indigenous Survivors of Child Welfare Network in March 2018.

“152 Years of Resistance” by Chief Lady Bird

www.chief ladybirdart.tumblr.com | @ChiefLadyBird

Nancy King is a First Nations (Potawatomi and Chippewa) artist from Rama First Nation. Her Anishinaabe name is Ogimaakwebnes, which means Chief Lady Bird.



Left to Right: Rally in Ottawa demanding justice for murdered and missing Indigenous women organized by the Native Women's Association of Canada, 2013; Rally demanding justice for murdered Indigenous teen, Tina Fontaine, 2018; a silent protest in Orillia marked the National Day for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women on May 5, 2019.

genocide from the United Nations charter or Canadian law. The Toronto Star article spends the whole piece pondering what they deem 'incomparable' genocides and asks, "Is that a club we want to join? Most importantly, have we thought through the implications?" If the government of Canada's actions (and inaction) fit the definition of what genocide is, should Canada get to vote on whether it's guilty? Why are the 'implications' the most important? This editorial has no humanity, it sounds like a board of directors afraid of getting sued and trying to protect themselves with lies and a phony public relations campaign rather than deal with the 'implications' of Canada's crimes.

When the Toronto Star finally mentions the internationally accepted legal definition of genocide from the United Nations Charter, they make it clear they never actually bothered to read it. The Star editors write, "But has Canada actually been out to 'destroy' Indigenous peoples, as the UN definition of genocide says? The inquiry argues that should include not just physical destruction, but "the destruction of a group as a social unit" with a distinct history, traditions and relationships. By that definition, relocating people or removing children from families could amount to 'destroying' them as a people." But it is not the inquiry's definition that talks about "removing children", the UN definition of genocide literally says that "forcibly transferring children of the group to another group" is a method of genocide. Did the whole editorial board not bother to read the definition of genocide before writing an article about it?

Indeed, unlike the above-mentioned newspaper editorials, the NIMMIWG investigated the definition of genocide. Their 46-page supplemental report outlines both the UN definition and the definition within Canada's laws. They point out that, "The Canadian definition relies partly on the international definition [...] However, the domestic statute explicitly adds one important element to the definition of genocide: omissions – that is, the failure to act – can constitute genocidal conduct." It seems that if the editorial boards had bothered to read

the report they felt so justified in criticizing, they could have answered a lot of their own 'questions'. This leads me to wonder if they read the report and then decided to ignore it, or if they did not bother reading the report's findings at all.

While the Saskatoon StarPhoenix, Regina Leader-Post, and Toronto Star editorials were terrible, the most disturbing was the Globe and Mail's "Is Canada committing genocide? That doesn't add up."

The Globe and Mail Editorial Board asks, "Is the commission saying that the deaths of the 38 Indigenous women who, according to Statistics Canada, died by homicide in 2017 should be investigated under Canada's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act, the law governing genocide? And is there evidence that the federal government is criminally complicit in those deaths, and that the homicides were "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, an identifiable group of persons"?"

Of course, had they taken the time to read the findings of the Inquiry they would not have tried to make such juvenile arguments. For example, the supplemental report on genocide explains, "The insidious and gradual nature of the obliteration of Indigenous peoples, and the lack of a uniform national policy spearheaded by a totalitarian mastermind, differentiate colonial genocide from our traditional understanding of what constitutes a genocide. These distinguishing factors have, unfortunately, allowed the Canadian consciousness to dismiss Canada's colonial policies as racist and misconceived, rather than acknowledge them as explicitly genocidal and, even, ongoing."

So no, Toronto Star, the inquiry is not saying that homicides of Indigenous Women and Girls "should be investigated under Canada's Crimes Against Humanity and War Crimes Act."

Yes, Toronto Star, the NIMMIWG is saying "there is evidence that the federal government is criminally complicit in those deaths." Not only that, the 2019 NIMMIWG relied on 98 previous reports that focused on or mentioned

violence against Indigenous women in Canada. A select few of the previous reports are outlined in an article for the National Post by journalist, Genna Buck. They stretch all the way back to the Bryce Report of 1907 which sounded the alarm on the health crisis and high death rates in Indian Residential Schools in Canada. The article, "MMIW inquiry drew from 98 earlier reports. The same problems and unrealized solutions echo through them all" explains how previous reports have made similar recommendations to the government of Canada, and little to no action has been taken. If the government has been handed hundreds of recommendations and potential solutions over decades but refuses to act, are they not "criminally complicit"?

The Globe and Mail Editorial Board additionally states, "Part of the problem has been a lackadaisical attitude by police investigators, and the ill-informed belief by past governments that the murders and disappearances were merely a police matter, and not linked to the social ills faced by Indigenous women and Indigenous communities."

Again, the fact that they use terms like "lackadaisical attitude" means that they not only disagree with the report's use of the word genocide, but are also disputing the fact that this report and so many past reports have shown that the issues facing Indigenous women and girls are systemic issues, not a few bad apples. Past governments have not been under an "ill-informed belief," instead they have been handed report after report that has linked the cases of murdered and missing Indigenous women with "the social ills" and systemic inequality they face. The response of those governments has been to actively ignore the recommendations of previous reports.

However the Toronto Star continues asserting, "While Ottawa often moves too slowly to address the many interlinked issues facing Indigenous people – higher rates of poverty and incarceration than non-Indigenous populations, lower rates of high-school completion, a disproportionate likelihood

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SAUDI ARABIA: TERROR AT HOME, TERROR ABROAD

By Azza Rojbi

It's an honor to be with the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, a friend of mine, a man who has really done things in the last five years in terms of opening up Saudi Arabia. And I think especially what you've done for women.

-U.S. PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP in conversation with Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammad Bin Salman (MBS) at the G20 conference in Osaka, Japan, June 28, 2019

This absurd quotation is from what amounted to a lip-service and back-patting session between Trump and the Saudi Crown Prince, just two days after the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) was presented with the report on the murder of the Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi. But of course, at this meeting Trump did not say a word about it and when two journalists asked him to address the murder of Khashoggi, Trump awkwardly pretended that he didn't hear them.

Journalist Jamal Khashoggi was forcibly restrained, drugged, and killed. His body was cut into pieces by a team of 15 Saudi military and secret police operatives sent to Istanbul, Turkey specifically to murder Khashoggi inside the Saudi consulate.

Almost nine months after Khashoggi's murder, Agnes Callamard, UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial executions, presented her findings on the case at the UNHRC. The report concluded that, "Mr. Khashoggi has been the victim of a deliberate, premeditated execution, an extrajudicial killing for which the state of Saudi Arabia is responsible under international human rights law".

The report also found, "there is credible evidence, warranting further investigation of high-level Saudi Officials' individual liability, including the Crown Prince's" and further indicates that, "the Saudi investigation into the murder was not conducted in good faith, and might amount to obstructing justice."

Despite the UNHRC report on this atrocious crime committed by Saudi Arabia's government, Trump continued praising the Saudi Crown Prince and turned a blind eye to the findings of this report. Of course, justice and human rights have never been a concern of President Trump.

Saudi Arabia: a Terrorist State

The latest findings by the UN special rapporteur are not an exception or an isolated case. Saudi Arabia is a country lacking any democratic institutions and is in fact a despotic monarchy where decisions are made by the ruling family and their clique.

Basic human and democratic rights are denied in Saudi Arabia. The existence of independent human rights groups is forbidden, as well as public gatherings and demonstrations. Women in Saudi Arabia are deprived of their basic rights and live under the oppressive male



guardianship system where a senior male family member controls their life from birth to death. Saudi human rights activists who defy and challenge these undemocratic, repressive, and inhuman laws face arrest, persecution, imprisonment, and even execution.

Saudi Arabia has one of the highest execution rates in the world. In 2018, the kingdom carried out 149 executions

mostly by beheading. According to the European Saudi Organisation for Human Rights (ESHR), 107 people have been executed in Saudi Arabia so far this year and the number is expected to rise drastically.

On April 23, 2019, the kingdom beheaded 37 prisoners in a mass execution across the country. Thirty-two of those executed belonged to the country's oppressed Shi'a minority. Lynn Maalouf, Middle East Research Director at Amnesty International said that this mass execution, "is a chilling demonstration of the Saudi Arabian authorities callous disregard for human life. It is also yet another gruesome indication of how the death penalty is being used as a political tool to crush dissent from within the country's Shi'a minority".

In addition to persecuting human rights activists in Saudi Arabia, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman and his ruling clique have been tracking down and silencing dissenting and critical voices abroad, the case of Khashoggi is far from being an isolated one.

On October 12, 2018, The Intercept, an online news media source reported, "the government [of Saudi Arabia] has continued to exert its control on dissenting voices beyond its borders... In March 2017, prominent human rights activist Loujan al-Hathloul was arrested in the United Arab Emirates, where she was studying for her master's degree. She was forced onto a private plane, flown back to Saudi Arabia, and jailed briefly, then placed under a travel ban. Later, in May 2018, Saudi security again arrested al-Hathloul at her home amid a wider crackdown on activists."

Loujain al-Hathloul, a University of British Columbia graduate (in Vancouver, Canada) was an outspoken women's rights activist and actively campaigned to push for women to have the right to drive in Saudi Arabia. She was arrested along with other prominent women's rights activists just a few weeks before the Saudi government lifted the ban on women driving. Those who continue to praise the Saudi Crown Prince for being a modernist and reformer for lifting the driving ban are dishonest, as MBS continues to take credit for the sacrifice and human rights campaigning of Saudi women for women's rights. Loujain and other women's rights activists are still detained in Saudi jails. Amnesty International reported that they have been subjected to torture and sexual harassment.

Saudi Arabia: Terror Abroad

The government of Saudi Arabia is not only criminal and repressive at home, but also abroad.

In 2009, Wikileaks published leaked diplomatic cables written by then-U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton on terrorist financing. The leaked memo stated that, “Donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide,” and that, “Saudi Arabia remains a critical financial support base for al-Qaeda, the Taliban... and other terrorist groups”.

Despite the government of Saudi Arabia and its stooges claiming that this is no longer true, more recent events and facts show the clear continuation of this pattern. In another Wikileaks file of a private speech by Hillary Clinton in 2013, she acknowledged that, “the Saudis have exported more extreme ideology than any other place on earth over the course of the last 30 years”.

In June 2012, the UK’s Guardian Newspaper released reports that showed how so-called “Syrian rebels” were on Saudi payroll to fight against the legitimate government of Syria. Wikileaks also published an email from Clinton in 2014, where she refers to Saudi Arabia’s support for ISIS/ISIL in Syria. She explains, “We need to use our diplomatic and more traditional intelligence assets to bring pressure on the governments of Qatar and Saudi Arabia, which are providing clandestine financial and logistic support to ISIL and other radical Sunni groups in the region”. This is interesting because it is a clear admission from the now-former U.S. Secretary of State during the first term of Obama presidency.

Another example of Saudi Arabia’s involvement in funding terrorists is in Libya. An article by the British Daily Mail from March 2011 this subtitle reads, “U.S. asks Saudi Arabia to supply rebels with weapons, in a bid to avoid direct military involvement in Libya unrest”. The Saudi regime continues meddling in Libya today, an article published on April 12, 2019 by the Wall Street Journal reports that, “Days before Libyan military commander Khalifa Haftar launched an offensive to seize the capital and attempt to unite the divided country under his rule, Saudi Arabia promised tens of millions of dollars to help pay for the operation, according to senior advisers to the Saudi government.” The United Nations’ Libya envoy has described Haftar’s attempt to take Tripoli as a coup.

It is also important to remember that in 2011 during popular uprisings in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia sent in troops, tanks, and Light Armoured Vehicles (LAV) to violently quash the peaceful protests in order to keep their puppet Bahraini monarchs in power. Those Light Armoured Vehicles that Saudi Arabia used in Bahrain were the ones that the Saudi regime bought from Canada throughout the 1990s and early 2000s and continuing through to today. In May 2015, The Globe and Mail Newspaper reported that when, “asked if it believes the Saudis used made-in-Canada LAVs when they went into Bahrain, the Canadian government doesn’t deny this happened.”

A new and more sophisticated version of these armored vehicles are being sold today to Saudi Arabia by the government of Canada for the sum of \$15billion. In addition, Canada is also selling them rifles and other military equipment. This continues while Canada is completely ignoring Saudi Arabia’s ongoing brutal and inhuman actions at home and abroad, including the war on Yemen.

Saudi Arabia: Leading the Criminal War on Yemen

“The first is the disastrous war in Yemen. The facts are well known but bear repeating. A Saudi-led coalition is responsible for the majority of the war’s tens of thousands of deaths and has perpetrated “widespread and systematic” targeting of civilians, according to experts reporting to the U.N. Security Council. The coalition’s blockade is the leading cause of what is now the world’s worst humanitarian crisis, with 85,000 infant children thought to have died from starvation since 2015. Washington and London have been the facilitators of the carnage, providing vital assistance that the Saudi-led bombing campaign simply could not function without.” This quotation is from a June 27, 2019 New York Times article titled, “Saudi Arabia is running out of friends.”

The humanitarian crisis that the Saudi-led war on Yemen has created is so immense that even the mainstream media in the U.S. must break

Yemenis rally against war on the 4th anniversary of the Saudi-led war on Yemen, in Sana’a, March 26, 2019



A funeral procession after an airstrike killed 12 civilians, including 7 children in Sana’a, Yemen, April 10, 2019



Protesting for the freedom of Saudi political prisoners in front of the Saudi Embassy in the Hague, January 25, 2019



its silence to expose it every once in a while. As the U.S. backed Saudi-led aggression in Yemen enters its fifth year, a recent report on June 18, 2019, by the U.S. based research group, Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED) shows that the death toll from the war is approaching 100,000 people.

In addition to all the civilian deaths, the Saudi-led bombing campaign has destroyed schools, hospitals, cultural centers, homes, roads, markets, factories, water and sanitation systems and several other vital infrastructures. The living conditions of the Yemeni people continue to deteriorate daily. If they survive the bombing they might die of hunger or succumb to cholera and other diseases. According to the UN, every ten minutes, a child under five in Yemen dies of preventable causes and over 22 million people in Yemen—or three-quarters of the population— need “urgent humanitarian aid and protection.”

Saudi Arabia: An Imperialist Puppet

Looking back at the havoc, killings, wars, and terrorism that the Saudi government has helped foment at home and abroad, Saudi Arabia is a friend only to those who are the enemies of the people of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). For decades, Saudi Arabia has played an important role serving the interests of imperialism in the MENA region. Saudi Arabia has been doing the dirty work of the U.S. and other imperialist countries in the region and constantly intervening

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VENEZUELA & IMPERIALIST CONFRONTATION IN LATIN AMERICA

What are our tasks & perspectives to defend Venezuela?

By Alison Bodine & Ali Yerevani

"Today, 200 years later, we can say it: After having lost that independence that cost so much, Venezuela, in these last ten years...has recovered its independence...and this recovered independence is a door that we should keep open so that for the next years and decades we can recover all the needs of the people: Freedom, equality, happiness, living, life, a humane country, a full country."

President Hugo Chavez said these words at a civic-military parade in Caracas, Venezuela on July 5, 2011, during the 200th anniversary of Venezuela's Declaration of Independence from Spain. As Chavez explains, through the achievements of the Bolivarian revolutionary process, now, the people of Venezuela not only mark their independence from Spain but also their tremendous advances towards independence from U.S. imperialism.

Today, together with Cuba, the democratically elected government of President Maduro and the Bolivarian revolutionary process are now the biggest threat to the hegemony of the United States in the Western Hemisphere.

U.S. Imperialism Vs. Venezuela's Independence

The 16th Summit of the ALBA-TCP was held in Havana, Cuba in December 2019. The ALBA-TCP, which was founded in 2004 by Cuba and Venezuela, is the Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our Americas – People's Trade Treaty. It is an inter-governmental organization and series of ongoing trade agreements established as an alternative to the U.S.-controlled FTAA (Free Trade Agreement of the Americas). In his remarks during the Summit the President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, clearly laid out this critical confrontation between imperialism and independence in Venezuela. He said,

"Latin America is a disputed zone. It is a hard-fought dispute between the neocolonial, imperialist project of the United States versus the project of liberation, independence, shared happiness of our Latin American and Caribbean peoples. It is an area amidst an intense dispute; there is an offensive against progressive governments. We are certainly in the eye of the hurricane. We are the objective of the threats by the Empire and its satellite governments in the continent, of a brutal

campaign against the Bolivarian Revolution and our democracy."

U.S. President Trump and his administration have also framed this confrontation in their own interests. By using words such as "democracy" and "human rights," the U.S. government and their allies are attempting to paint a picture that is dangerously similar to that used to justify their bloody attacks against Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria, all countries that have been torn apart at the seams by U.S.-led war, sanctions and occupation. None of these countries have seen the promised "return to democracy" or flourishing of human rights, because that was never the true objective of the U.S. government and their allies. Their objective was always, as it is with Venezuela today, to bring these countries back under the control of U.S. imperialism, no matter the human cost.

Iraq, Libya, Syria and now Venezuela are not the only countries that have been callously slated for destruction by the U.S. war machine during this new era of war and occupation, which began with the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001. In 2007, retired U.S. General Wesley Clark did an interview on Democracy Now in which he revealed a classified memo that he saw in 2001 that described how the U.S. was, "going to take out seven countries in five years, starting with Iraq, and then Syria, Lebanon, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and, finishing off, Iran."

This memo is significant in understanding why the U.S. government is targeting Venezuela. Those seven countries share something with Venezuela today – which is their independence from the control of U.S. foreign policy. Yes, some of these countries are rich in oil or other natural resources, but not all of them. All of them, however, had either achieved their independence from U.S. hegemony or were fighting for it, at the time that the memo was written.

U.S. War Against Venezuela Rages On

To stall Venezuela's march towards independence, the U.S. government and their allies have unleashed war, economic terrorism and a vicious media campaign against Venezuela.



The U.S. sanctions, which began to be intensified under the Presidency of Barack Obama in 2014, consist of over 150 measures aimed at destroying the Venezuelan economy and forcing the overthrow of President Maduro. In total, sanctions imposed by the U.S., Canada, the E.U. and Switzerland are estimated to have cost Venezuela more than \$130 billion since 2015, this amount is equivalent to Venezuela's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in one year. In addition, there is nearly \$5.5 billion being illegally held by international financial institutions including Citibank and the Bank of England.

The imperialist blockade against Venezuela has cut the country off from normal and established methods of international trade and financing. It is a deliberate campaign by the U.S. government and their allies to sabotage the economy of Venezuela and deny the people of Venezuela access to needed food, medicines and other basic goods.

One example of the human impact of the imposition of the sanctions regime against Venezuela is in the health sector. The U.S. government and their mainstream media mouthpieces never mention a word about the sanctions imposed against Venezuela. Instead, they would like people around the world to believe that shortages in medicines are

caused by the neglect of the government of Venezuela.

However, as explained by Marcel Quintana, co-founder of the LGBT AIDS awareness group ASES Venezuela, in an interview with Michael Fox for the Real News Network, the blockade is even impacting Venezuela's ability to cooperate with international health organizations to secure the supply of medicines. He explains "We understand that the Pan American Health Organization has had to change the accounts [used to purchase the medicine] four times because they keep getting blocked. The blockade is not just against the government, it's against the people who are living with HIV, it's against the people living with cancer because they don't allow the medicine to come into the country. They are blocking not just the country, but the health of the people living with HIV. And this is serious. Very serious."

The U.S. government continues to threaten Venezuela with further military intervention. At a press conference on June 25, 2019, the U.S. government's special envoy to Venezuela, war criminal Elliot Abrams once again insisted that the military option against Venezuela was still on the table. At the same time, he announced that a U.S. Navy hospital ship had left Miami headed towards Venezuela. Much more than a hospital ship, this U.S. Navy vessel is part of U.S. military operations in Latin America and the Caribbean, and is intended to demonstrate that, "U.S. Southern Command is committed to the region in support of our Caribbean and Latin American partners, as well as displaced Venezuelans who continue to flee the brutal oppression of the former Maduro regime and its interlocking, man-made political, economic and humanitarian crises" as was stated by the commander of U.S. Southern Command. This is a further provocation against the Venezuelan government, as well as an affront to Venezuela's sovereignty and dignity as if to say that the people and government of Venezuela are not capable of taking care of their own affairs.

The government of Canada has also continued to take a leading role in the imperialist campaign to overthrow the government of Venezuela and reverse the gains made by poor, working and oppressed people in the Bolivarian revolutionary process. This includes illegal and unjust sanctions against nearly 100 Venezuelans.

As tweeted recently by the Foreign Minister of Canada, Chrystia Freeland, in reference to the pro-imperialist, right-wing Lima Group, "Canada and our Lima Group partners Argentina, Brazil and Chile met on the sidelines of the #G20 to discuss the human rights violations of the Maduro regime and our shared commitment to a peaceful return to democracy in #Venezuela." Recently, Freeland has also had discussions about Venezuela with



President Maduro at a demonstration in Caracas, Venezuela, February 2, 2019



Mike Pence, Vice President of the USA with Fabiana Rosales, Juan Guaidó's wife, in the White House, March 27, 2019

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, as reported by the CBC news network in Canada.

The capitalist ruling class of the United States and other imperialist countries are imposing war and blockade on Venezuela to strengthen their position in Latin America and the Caribbean as they drive to regain hegemony in the region. Their support for the so-called "interim President" of Venezuela Juan Guaidó and their continued backing of Venezuela's violent counter-revolutionary opposition also demonstrates that they are committed to improving the position of the capitalist class in Venezuela against the government of Venezuela and the Bolivarian revolutionary process.

Venezuela Defends Their Sovereignty and Self-Determination

It has now been over five months since the U.S. government and their imperialist allies appointed Juan Guaidó as "interim President" of Venezuela. Despite U.S. backing, their puppet has completely failed to carry out a coup d'état against the democratically elected President, Nicolás Maduro. In fact, Juan Guaidó's lackeys in Colombia have now been exposed by the Panam Post for embezzling more than \$100,000 intended to be used for "humanitarian aid" and the upkeep of deserters

from Venezuela's military.

In contrast, people in Venezuela have faced a criminal blockade; sabotage to their electrical grid; continued right-wing violence; and further attempts at coup and assassinations, with dignity and constant mobilization. Bravely, the people of Venezuela have continued to defend their democracy, their President, and their Bolivarian revolutionary process.

The government of Venezuela has also defended its independence through their commitment to solidarity and cooperation with other countries and social movements throughout Latin America and the Caribbean.

This includes their participation and building of organizations such as ALBA-TCP and CELAC (Community of Latin American and Caribbean States), as well as their continued commitment to Petrocaribe. One component of Petrocaribe is a program that delivers oil from Venezuela to participating countries in exchange for goods and services.

Venezuela's steadfast defence of their sovereignty and independence is creating a deepening confrontation with imperialism.

Discussions and Debates are good, But Building Venezuela Solidarity Movement is a Priority and a Necessity

Let us be clear, the U.S.-led imperialist assault on Venezuela is not about ideology. It is not about abstract ideas about the political character of Venezuela's government, nor a battle between notions of good and evil, or some emphasis that this is about oil.

The war on Venezuela today is a war on a country that is asserting its independence from imperialism.

Independence from imperialism and sovereignty, not socialism, is the message today broadcast from Venezuela to the people of Latin America and the world. The U.S. government and their allies cannot accept and cannot tolerate a growing anti-imperialist movement, one which has the capacity to bring colonial and semi-colonial countries in Latin America and around the world united against the imperialist bully and their endless drive for capitalist market hegemony, neocolonialism and super exploitation.

Many respected progressive and leftist intellectuals and analysts in North America and Europe are paying perhaps too much attention, or are carried away by the internal dynamics of the Bolivarian revolution, without realizing that our main task is not to speculate about the revolutionary process in Venezuela. We must understand what Venezuela needs right now and consequently what our main and immediate tasks are – especially as people living in the U.S. or Canada, in the belly of the beast. The best way to contribute to the

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CATASTROPHIC HYPOCRISY!

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT DECLARES "NATIONAL CLIMATE EMERGENCY" ONE DAY, AND RE-APPROVES TRANS MOUNTAIN PIPELINE EXPANSION THE NEXT

By Thomas Davies

Imagine the facial expression on the staff person writing up Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's schedule this month. "June 17. 7pm – Declare 'National Climate Emergency'. June 18. 4pm – Re-Approve Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion (TMX)" Hopefully one day they will write a memoir detailing the cynical planning that went into that 24 hour period, but for now, we have to wade through Trudeau and the mainstream media chorus doing their best to justify the two obviously contradictory announcements.



Protest in Vancouver hours after TMX pipeline re-approval announcement, June 18, 2019

"Vancouver gas prices are too high because the pipeline isn't built."

"Canada doesn't get enough money for its Tar Sands oil because it can't get to Chinese markets"

"We need to restore 'market confidence' that we can get more big projects like this built."

"All the oil workers will lose their jobs if we don't approve this."

"Canada is too small to make any real difference regardless."

We will get to each of these weak arguments individually, but it's important to point out that neither

Trudeau or the army of 'expert' newspaper columnists dared ask the two most simple and important questions:

1. If the world's best and broadest scientific consensus is that we are indeed in a "climate emergency" which threatens the future of humanity, and Canada is nowhere near its United Nations climate targets even before approving the Tar Sands Pipeline, how can we even consider approving it?

2. Is the Trans Mountain Pipeline really the only reasonable possible solution for Canada's economy, gas prices and green transition? Are there really no other good options?

The Pipeline Will Fix Gas Prices?

Despite the Alberta government spending millions of dollars on billboards all around Vancouver leading up to the TMX announcement, high gas prices are not because we don't have another pipeline. Economist Robyn Allan, former CEO of the Insurance Corporation of BC, and Marc Eliesen, former chairman and CEO of BC Hydro and a former director of Suncor, wrote a 47-page report to the BC Utilities Commission to clarify that blaming price spikes on "chronic shortages" or lack of pipeline capacity appears "designed to serve the price gouging behaviour of suppliers rather than shed light on actual market factors and conditions." The report found that just four suppliers – Suncor, Imperial, Shell and Parkland – control the market in the Lower Mainland and that these four suppliers are likely responsible for "excessive and volatile" prices since 2015.

Mythical Asian Markets

And those mythical "Asian markets" which are willing to pay a high price for Alberta bitumen? David Anderson, former Liberal Minister of Environment who served 10 years in the cabinets of prime ministers Jean Chretien and Paul Martin, sent letters to six members of Trudeau's cabinet emphasizing, "There is no credible evidence to suggest that Asia is likely to be a reliable or a significant market for Alberta bitumen." Anderson detailed how Asian refineries already have better supply options with conventional light and medium crude oil from Nigeria and the Middle East because Alberta bitumen is expensive to produce, hard

Seriously...what part of declaring a climate emergency and approving an oil pipeline within 24 hours don't you get?



to handle, and provides no security of supply advantages.

"Market Confidence" at the Expense of the Planet and Workers

Do we really want to sacrifice the planet and the future to create "market confidence" so that huge unsustainable resource extraction mega-projects can be built? Just the opposite! Putting "the market" above all else is what got us into this mess in the first place. Especially when that always ends up being "ensuring corporate profits at the expense of all else."

The Corporate Mapping Project report, released by Parkland Institute and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives B.C. office, analyzed the profits of Canada's five largest oil producers. Turns out Suncor, CNRL, Cenovus, Imperial and Husky have remained "incredibly profitable" according to lead author Ian Hussey – with a combined aggregate gross profit of \$46.6 billion in 2017. "There's no question that the

price crash had a major impact on the industry in Alberta, most importantly on the almost 20,000 workers who lost their jobs in 2015, but the Big Five are doing just fine,” Hussey said.

The oil company executives might be doing fine, but what about the 400 workers who are losing their jobs as Suncor plans to build a fleet of more than 150 driverless hauling trucks over the next six years?

What about the 35,000 unionized members of the B.C. Building Trades who had their Saturday overtime cut-back as the contractors association stalled negotiations and the Labour Board refused to allow them to strike before enforcing a settlement?

Too Small to Make a Difference?

Never one to lose an opportunity to try and turn back history, National Post columnist Rex Murphy called climate change, “a global problem what Canada has not the least competence to fix.” He was repeating an often employed tactic - used when it's no longer possible to argue that Canada is being responsible for its carbon emissions. This rhetoric disregards a few important things. First, Canada has the world's 10th largest economy. Second, Canada produces more greenhouse gas emission per capita than any other G20 country. “It's because of the oilsands and because of transportation,” commented Catherine Abreu, executive director of the Climate Action Network Canada. While transportation might be more understandable given that Canada also has the second largest land mass in the world – the Alberta oil sands is a massive

polluter causing exponential damage to the environment.

Cracks Showing

Already the re-approval is on shaky ground. The Shxwowhamel First Nation has announced it now opposes the pipeline because the government's consultation process was so weak. Former Supreme

Protest in Vancouver hours after TMX pipeline re-approval announcement, June 18, 2019



Court of Canada justice Frank Iacobucci, who was charged with overseeing the court-ordered consultations with Indigenous people, only met community leaders once, at a gathering with other Indigenous Nations in Vancouver. He did not satisfy community concerns that the construction route for the pipeline would run through an ancient village and desecrate or destroy a 1,400-year-old sacred site full of artifacts, 20 traditional homes (called pit houses), and possible gravesites.

The Shxwowhamel First Nation will now join the Tsleil-Waututh Nation, the Squamish Nation and the Coldwater community who have all confirmed they will also challenge the re-approval of the pipeline project.

Writing in the National Observer on June 27, Sven Biggs, a campaigner for Stand. Earth, also summarized, “The last time we checked in with the National Energy Board, only two of seven segments of the Trans Mountain pipeline route were fully approved. Over a quarter of the new pipeline route has not been approved. And 25 hearings have yet to take place — including for the Fraser River crossing, Burnaby Mountain tunnel, and areas where schools, homes and municipal water supplies are at risk. As of the latest public update from the province of British Columbia, 658 permits are still being reviewed and 243 have not even been applied for.”

Our Struggle Continues, the Movement is Growing

So while all of the arguments thrown out by politicians and mainstream media pundits are weak at best,

they are also irrelevant if we choose not to disregard the scientific realities – as people like Justin Trudeau and Rex Murphy do on purpose. The political reality is also one where inequality is growing and the cost of living is increasing much faster than wages. Clearly, the status quo is not sustainable for the planet or the vast majority of people living on it. Clearly, there are more solutions than just building this pipeline.

It has been ten years of disappointing government and corporate announcement about the TMX pipeline, but it has also been ten years that communities have come together to make sure it has not been built. Now is not the time to give up. Now is the time to get bigger, broader and bolder in our actions. The climate and economic crises negatively impact the vast majority of people – that makes for a lot of potential allies. We need to continue to educate, organize and mobilize to demand the government cancel the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion, and focus on real solutions for the people and the planet instead of pipelines and profits.

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By Thomas Davies

Thomas Davies is a social and environmental justice organizer based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the Fire This Time Newspaper and a founding member of Climate Convergence Metro-Vancouver.



Follow Thomas on Twitter:
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Alison Bodine & Brenna Rosen



Cecilia Point, Musqueam Nation



Arnie Jack, Shuswap Nation



Discussion Groups



Thomas Davies



Tamara Lorincz



David Barsamian

CLIMATE JUSTICE 2019 CONFERENCE

A BIG SUCCESS

CLIMATE JUSTICE ACTIVISTS DISCUSS TASKS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR FURTHER STRUGGLE

By Thomas Davies

The Climate Justice 2019 Conference was organized in an attempt to bring people together to discuss the many emerging and dynamic aspects of the climate justice movement both locally and internationally – and start to work towards more unified and strategic response to the climate crisis. In the days leading up to the conference, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau declared a “national climate emergency” and re-approved the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion in an incredible display of hypocrisy. This added a sense of urgency to the many discussions which took place.

Organized by Climate Convergence Vancouver, the conference was a big success. Over 175 people participated in more than eight hours of keynote presentations, workshops and discussions. The room was diverse in background and experience – with many participating the entire day.

Tamara Lorincz - Co-founder of the East Coast Environmental Law Association and Board Member of Canadian Voice of Women for Peace opened with a special presentation, “What’s War Got to Do with It? Militarization, War & the Climate Crisis” She made a convincing argument that not only are imperialist war-makers the largest polluters,

but that vast billions of dollars spent on weapons and war every year could easily fund all of the green energy and social programs we are so often told are too expensive to be realistic.

Cecilia Point of the Musqueam Nation also gave a Territorial Acknowledgement – emphasizing the history of the unceded Indigenous land which the conference was taking place on – and the importance of unity moving forward to confront the climate crisis and ongoing violations of Indigenous rights by the government of Canada.

The room was full when David Barsamian, author of over 25 books and director of Alternative Radio gave his feature presentation, “What do You Mean System Change Not Climate Change?” Barsamian, who has worked closely with Noam Chomsky, Edward Said and Arundhati Roy, detailed how capitalism created the current world crisis and is completely unable to solve it. “Luckily for us, capitalism is a system created by humans, which means humans can also dismantle it.”

He was followed by Climate Convergence organizers Alison Bodine and Brenna Rosen co-presenting a panel on, “The Climate Justice Movement - How Far We Have Come.” They gave many examples of past movements, from Bolivia to Clayoquot Sound in British Columbia – pulling lessons from both their successes and challenges. The breakout discussions after the presentation focused

on how we could apply those lessons to our current organizing.

Arnie Jack of the Shuswap Nation made a special appearance to explain the process and history of Indigenous nations fighting for their land and rights in British Columbia. He especially emphasized the role non-Indigenous people also need to play, “We need a mass mobilization at the Burnaby Mountain Tank Farm.”

The Conference presentations closed with Climate Convergence founding member Thomas Davies discussing, “Climate Convergence: Our Struggle, Our Perspective”. He focused on the evolution of Climate Convergence as a grassroots climate justice organization playing a significant role in the local movement against the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion, as well as the incredible potential of the climate justice movement not just to stop specific projects, but move towards building a just and sustainable world.

The conference was an important step towards the important goal of building and broadening not only the numbers of people involved in the climate justice movement but our collective understanding of how to confront the crucial work which remains. Check www.climateconvergence.ca for the many ongoing actions and events!

*Follow Thomas on Twitter:
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By Alison Bodine &
Tamara Hansen

The CBC article headline reads, "Majority of Canadians against accepting more refugees, poll suggests." It reports that, "the [poll] results come as no surprise to immigration experts and advocates, who point to a negative shift in tone on migration around the world, especially when it comes to refugees. They say that trend is stoked by media coverage in Canada of asylum seekers crossing the country's border with the U.S."

Alemayehu Beyene, an Ethiopian who arrived in Canada with his family 2.5 years ago after spending around 20 years in a refugee camp in Sudan told CBC, "Maybe they don't understand why we came here. [...] Nobody wants to be a refugee. Somebody push[es] you to go into refuge."

So, where do refugees come from? And as a rich and advanced industrial country, why does the government of Canada have a duty and human obligation to welcome and support hundreds of thousands more refugees and migrants?

Crisis for Humanity: Refugees and Migrants Around the World

Today there are over 70.8 million people around the world who have been forcibly displaced from their homes, as reported by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). People whose homes have become so unliveable due to war, occupation, extreme poverty, and the climate crisis that they have left everything that they have ever known in search of somewhere safe to live.

The Mediterranean Sea continues to be the deadliest crossing for migrants, who climb into small boats that have little chance of meeting the shores of Greece, Italy, or Spain. Between 2014 and 2018, more than 17,900 people were found drowned or went missing in the Mediterranean (International Organization for Migration-IOM).

From Central America, thousands of people also die as they travel through Mexico, with nearly 2,000 people dying at the U.S.-Mexico border in the last five years (IOM). Some of the people dying at the border have already spent months walking, in some cases, over 2,250 kilometres in search of safety in the United States.

With many bodies left unidentifiable and unrecoverable, these numbers are only an estimate of the immense human tragedy that is forced migration.

The New Era of War and Occupation

Since the U.S./Canada/NATO invasion of Afghanistan in 2001, the world has been engulfed by a new era characterized by

Below: Hundreds of refugees held beneath the Paso Del Norte International Bridge in El Paso, Texas by U.S. Customs and Border Protection, March 2019



Below: U.S. Protest against migrant detention facilities in Manhattan, July 2, 2019



ongoing imperialist wars and occupations. The U.S.-led warpath has crossed from North Africa to the Middle East, through Latin America, and into the Caribbean – and with each passing moment threatens another developing country in another corner of the globe. There is of course, an obvious and direct correlation between war and refugees. As one example, the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reported that, as of June 2019, 57% percent of refugees come from just three countries in North Africa and the Middle East, the epicentre of U.S.-led wars: Syria, Afghanistan, and South Sudan.

For the last 18 years, since the new era of war and occupation began, there has been no end to the war, violence, and economic devastation imposed on people from Afghanistan to Iraq; Syria to Yemen; and Haiti to Libya by imperialist governments like the U.S., Canada, and the countries of the European Union. These military interventions and sanctions have destroyed infrastructure,

housing, hospitals, schools, and completely torn apart the social fabric of many countries. With no end to the war in sight, people have been forced to flee, first their homes, then their countries, and then ultimately the region entirely.

Imperialist governments are also responsible for the economic devastation imposed on colonial and semi-colonial countries around the world. The plunder and exploitation of these countries continues to line the pockets of the ultra-rich while destroying the living conditions and environments of the so-called "third-world".

The majority of people fleeing their homes (80% according to the UNHCR) settle in a neighbouring country, hoping to return home one day, or lacking the resources to travel further. However, for those that do risk their lives for somewhere to be safe and secure, their hardship is often only just beginning, as they face continued violence, predatory human traffickers, and sexual violence, as well as inhuman border policies, racism, and bigotry when they finally reach a border with Europe, Canada, or the United States.

Photos that Remind Us of Our Shared Humanity

A devastating photograph of a lifeless human being has once again brought the tragedy of migration into the homes of millions of people in the United States and around the world. In the heartbreaking photo, Oscar Martinez and his 23-month-old daughter, Angie Valeria, are face-down on the shore of the Rio Grande, just as Alan Kurdi the 2-year-old Syrian boy who died in 2015 was face-down in the sands of a Turkish beach.

These images tell the same story of hardship and more importantly illustrate the lengths that people will go through when there are no other options. The blame for their deaths and thousands of others like them lies squarely on the shoulders of the United States and their imperialist allies, on the wars, occupations, and plunder that has forced them to flee and the inhuman migration policies that have left them with nowhere to go.

Central & Latin American Migrants Seek a



Adults held at Elliniko II refugee camp in Greece protest against conditions at the site, February 5, 2017



The tragic human cost of the refugee crisis across two continents

Left: 2-year old Syrian refugee Aylan Kurdi's body washed up on a Turkish beach after the boat his family was on capsized, September 2, 2015

Right: Óscar Alberto Martínez Ramírez and his 2-year old daughter Valeria drowned while crossing the Rio Grande, on route to the U.S. from El Salvador, June 24, 2019



New Life in the U.S.

As Bloomberg News reported, “More than 144,000 migrants were taken into custody along the U.S. border in May, a 32% jump from April, and the biggest monthly total in 13 years, according to Customs and Border Protection. Almost four-fifths of those apprehended were from the Northern Triangle [a reference used for the countries of Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala].”

In Latin America and the Caribbean, over 500 years of colonization and imperialist intervention and plunder has dug a deep wound. The lack of political and economic stability and devastating violence imposed on these countries is the result of the 56 U.S. military interventions (since 1890), the so-called “U.S. war on drugs,” and continuous U.S. meddling carried out in order to secure the theft and pillaging of Latin America’s resources to benefit the imperialist capitalist class and enable them to create an acceptable living standard for the middle class and working class in countries like the United States. How many people in the advanced industrial countries really realize how their comfort and relatively stable life are paid for by billions of people in colonial and semi-colonial countries, from Puerto Rico and Haiti; to El Salvador and Brazil; to Nigeria and the Congo; to India and the Philippines. Colonial powers such as Canada and the U.S. have successfully disconnected their people from the rest of the world. We must reconnect this disconnection.

The relationship between U.S. intervention in Latin America and the devastating situation in these three countries is most clearly expressed by the 2009 U.S.-backed coup in Honduras. 10 years ago, the United States backed a right-wing overthrow of the elected government of Manuel Zelaya. Since then political repression, state violence, and increasing poverty in Honduras have escalated, creating structural and institutional vacuums, along with deep instability throughout the country. After the U.S. supported coup Honduras ended Manuel Zelaya’s presidency, a country with a prospect of political and economic development became a failed state.

Gangs throughout the region, like the MS-

13 which are so-often referred to by U.S. President Trump, were first formed in U.S. prisons, and then transplanted to Honduras, El Salvador, and Guatemala when people were released from prison and then deported. As the UNHCR reports, the conditions of life for people in the Northern Triangle are not improving, “Current homicide rates are among the highest ever recorded in Central America. Several cities, including San Salvador, Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, are among the 10 most dangerous in the world. The most visible evidence of violence is the high rate of brutal homicides, but other human rights abuses are on the rise, including the recruitment of children into gangs, extortion and sexual violence.”

Due to the political instability and deep poverty in the region, many people are being forced to leave their hometowns in search of a better life, sometimes due to threats and violence and other times due to a lack of financial opportunities. The UNHCR predicts that “By the end of 2019, there are expected to be 539,500 displaced people from Central America”. Many of these displaced people are desperately trying to go north and find a way into the United States.

The reaction of the U.S. government to the increasing number of migrants at the U.S./Mexico border – for whom it holds responsibility for their desperation – has been to criminalize and detain those trying to flee an unlivable situation in their country. Now, the Trump administration is once again facing backlash for the horrifying conditions for children at the U.S./Mexico border, where children are left alone in cages, uncared for, and without even a toothbrush. Since late 2018 six children have died while detained at the border.

Open air prisons, concentration camps, call them what you would like, the U.S. government is denying migrants their basic human dignity, let alone their rights and protections under international law.

Every day more children arrive, along with more migrants. U.S. government policies are causing deaths and hardship, and make no mistake, it only takes a brief examination



Above: Cartoon depicting Trump reacting indifferently to drowned asylum-seeker father and daughter. Canadian media company Brunswick News Inc. ended its contract with the cartoonist, Michael de Adder, 2 days after the cartoon went viral. De Adder said, “Does it matter if I was fired over one Donald Trump cartoon when every Donald Trump cartoon I submitted in the past year was axed?”

of history to understand that a wall and criminalization are not deterrents for people with no options. It only makes the crossings more expensive and more deadly.

Middle Eastern and North African Migrants Seek a New Life in Europe

“In total, there were 24 percent fewer people who journeyed over the Mediterranean in 2018 compared with 2017, and 84 percent fewer than in 2015. The proportion of people losing their lives during the crossing has gone up because they have been forced to choose more dangerous routes, and the Libyan coastguard, which is now patrolling the coast, lacks the rescue skills of European rescue services. According to the Norwegian Refugee Council, a total of seven percent of all those travelling over the Mediterranean lost their lives in 2018.” - “Hour of reckoning for European Refugee Policy” report by the Norwegian Refugee Council

The fear experienced, especially by women migrants, is clear in an interview with the Nation magazine in April 2019, and also shockingly similar to interviews and articles about the dangers faced by women

and children migrating from the Northern Triangle. The Nation interviewed Leila (not her real name), a refugee from Afghanistan living in the Samos Refugee Camp in Greece, where 4,000 people live in a facility with 648 beds. Leila explained, "When we arrived here in December, there was no place to sleep, so we had to buy a tent with our own money and set up in the woods outside the camp. [...] I was too shocked by the conditions to even think about how cold or squashed I was, but I thought at least there would be rules and security. But there are no rules. People have fights in the camp and you see them bleeding, but no one does anything. Men drink and party all night, so it's too loud to sleep. It was so frightening at night, we had to go to the toilet together, holding hands."

As long as the U.S. government and their allies, including countries in the European Union, continue to bomb, sanction and invade the Middle East and North Africa there will be continued migration to Europe. European governments must take responsibility for the devastation that they have caused and accept migrants and refugees with open arms.

Canada Can and Must Do Better!

Some might say, well Canada is different and welcoming of migrants and refugees. However, this distorts the fact that as per the UNHCR's global trend report in 2018 Canada has only welcomed 28,100 refugees out of about 1.4 million refugees that needed resettlement (globally, sadly just over 90,000 were resettled that year). Others might also say Canada is different because it was not involved in the war in Iraq, or because Canada is still seen by some as a peace-keeping country. However, the hands of the government of Canada are also covered in the blood of people throughout the Middle East and North Africa – think of Afghanistan, Libya, Sudan, and Mali. Canada currently is even in Iraq, with 250 Canadian Armed Forces personnel scheduled to remain there until November 2020 (Government of Canada website).

Compared to the economy, population, and sheer land mass of Canada, the government has set the targets for accepting refugees shamefully low. In 2018 it was 7,500 and in 2019 it is set for 9,300. There are more than 25 million refugees in the world, and Canada won't even accept 10,000 a year? The

overarching message of Canada's immigration policy remains that there are open doors for the wealthy, and a long and treacherous process for the poor and exploited who wish to stay for more than a short time to work for low wages.

Not only that, the CBC uncovered in October 2018 that the Canada Border Services Agency has a plan to increase the number of removals of migrants that have been deemed "inadmissible" from Canada to a target of 10,000 each year. So now Canada will be deporting more people than they are settling as refugees?

Open the Borders - Legal Status, Democratic Rights, Civil Rights & Human Rights for All!

After many promises, the Liberal government ultimately has accepted just over 50,000 refugees from Syria, since Trudeau took office in the fall of 2015. This includes a combination of government and privately sponsored refugees. This is not enough!

Also, as reported by Maclean's Magazine, "the 2019 federal budget, for example, proposes to take away their right to a full refugee hearing." Shame on the Trudeau government for saying they are welcoming of refugees, while taking away refugee rights!

The government of Canada has the responsibility to immediately accept 200,000 refugees, and grant them legal status, as well as all democratic, civil and human rights.

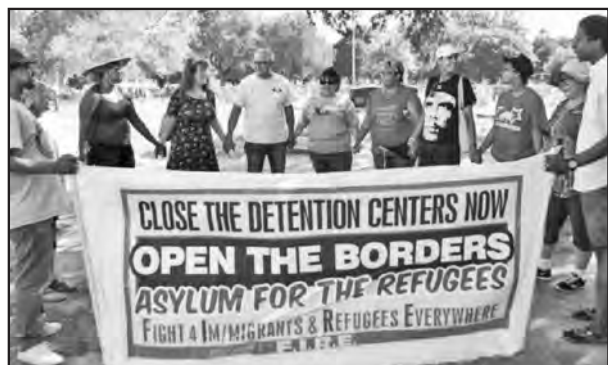
However, rather than accepting migrants with open arms, as they have the responsibility to do, the governments of the U.S. and Canada, along with their allies are criminalizing not only the migrants but also the people that are working to save their lives. In June 2019, the government of Italy arrested the captain of a Sea Watch ship that had rescued 40 people from the Mediterranean because she had violated their ban on migrants landing on Italian shores. In the United States, Scott Warren is facing 20 years in prison for leaving water and food for migrants crossing Mexico-U.S. border through deadly desert terrain.

As poor, working, and oppressed people in the U.S. and Canada we must stand in solidarity with the migrants and refugees who are showing up on the doorstep of the White House or Parliament Hill, and letting

imperialist governments know that they can no longer turn a blind eye to the suffering that they have imposed on millions of people in the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.

Open the borders immediately and unconditionally!

Left: Delegation from FIRE (Fight for Immigrants and Refugees Everywhere) visiting the South Texas Human Rights Center in Texas, June 30, 2018



OUR HERITAGE



Alexandra Kollontai

1872-1952

Russian revolutionary leader. During the 1917 Russian Revolution, she was a member of the Central Committee of the Bolshevik party. She is renowned for her feminist writings.

"Thus the assertion that women are men's most dangerous labour rival can only be accepted with a number of reservations. Leaving aside the question of the competition existing in the professions, we will note only that in the proletarian milieu, the woman worker only constitutes a rival to the man when she is isolated, not involved in the joint proletarian struggle. The woman worker is a rival to the male, a 'threatening' rival who lowers his wages and mercilessly destroys the fruit of his successes in his organised struggle against capital, only when she is not drawn into the general class and professional movement. However, is not every unorganised proletarian just such a rival, whether he be a hungry village 'yokel', a 'has-been' pushed out of his profession, or simply a worker deprived of a permanent job? The woman worker has a detrimental effect upon the conditions of work insofar as she is, as yet, the less organised section of the working class. Capital readily makes use of her to counter the more conscious and united section of the working class. However, the moment she enters the ranks of the organised fighters for working-class liberation, the assertion that she - the woman worker - is the worst rival of the working man - ceases to be categorical. The organised proletariat of whichever sex loses his or her capacity for harming class comrades."

From The Social Basis of the Woman Question (1909)

The Frankenstein of Human Rights Law:



Repeal Bill C-51 and Bill C-59!

By Thomas Davies

The most dangerous law passed by the Parliament of Canada before it closed for summer barely made the news. Seriously – did anyone see anything about “National Security” Bill C-59 becoming law? Apart from a couple of short online articles, and being listed in a few summaries of the last week of Parliament, there was an eerie silence about a law that so profoundly impacts our democratic and human rights in Canada.

Prime Minister Trudeau might blame the silence on a busy week, which included declaring a National Climate Emergency on Tuesday, and Re-Approving the Trans Mountain Pipeline Expansion on Wednesday. However, it doesn't take a genius to see that the Prime Minister and his government stalled this potentially politically explosive law for four years. They had seen, and benefited, from the widespread outrage to the democratic and human rights violations found in former Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper's “Anti-Terrorism” Bill C-51. So despite promising that “fixing” Bill C-51 would be a top priority when elected four years ago, they stalled until they were sure the movement defending democratic and human rights had died down before slipping in Bill C-59.

Destroying Human Rights Law

Now we're stuck with some leftovers from Bill C-51, some new provisions under Bill C-59, and a lot of confusion about who is allowed to do what, and what the government actually

thinks our rights are. Tim McSorley, national co-ordinator of the Ottawa-based International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group (ICLMG)

summarized the confusion, “The national security field is an opaque one, and staying informed of all the negative consequences of this bill will be difficult.”

The ICLMG has a good summary of the most concerning parts of Bill C-59, which we will reprint here because capitalist mainstream media such as the Globe and Mail, National Post, CBC, CTV or Maclean's, to name a few, certainly won't. Bill C-59:

- Continues to allow CSIS to engage in secret and dangerous threat disruption powers;
- Maintains the secretive No Fly List, which violates due process and has never been proven to be effective;
- Preserves overly-broad information sharing rules that infringe on privacy and free expression;
- Improves on review of national security activities by creating the National Security and Intelligence Review Agency, but falls far short by transferring the weakest aspects of current national security review bodies to the new agency;
- Grants sweeping new surveillance powers to both the CSE and CSIS, including the collection of metadata, vaguely defined “publicly available information,” and the incredibly broad category of “unselected information” (which essentially means any information);
- Introduces new powers to give CSIS agents or designated individuals immunity for committing crimes in the line of their work;
- Fails to prohibit the use and sharing, in all circumstances, of information linked to mistreatment and torture;



- Allows the CSE to engage in broad and powerful new “active cyber operations” with little oversight, creating the risk of retaliation as well as attacks from leaked new cyber-weapons.

So there's a lot to be really worried about – especially because we are stuck with a new Frankenstein approach to National Security and Anti-Terrorism Laws - with parts of Bill C-51 and Bill C-59 being stuck together to create something unrecognizable.

No Accountability

Already we are seeing huge accountability issues related to the new powers. Public Safety Canada has quietly set up a new centre to assist security and intelligence departments in the use of the new Security of Canada Information Disclosure Act (SCIDA). SCIDA allows for your personal information to be shared by security intelligence agencies as part of national security Bill C-59.

Ken Rubin uncovered the story and reported on it in the Ottawa Star on June 13, “It turns out the privacy commissioner, who, under the terms of Bill C-59, is to be consulted by security intelligence agencies and can review SCIDA's personal-data-sharing processes, has not heard of this centre either, nor has the public, MPs or the news media.”

Not off to a good start.

Maybe the new centre is next door to the Canadian Securities Exchange (CSE) new \$1.2 billion, 84 acres facility which is also next door to the CSIS building in Ottawa? A CBC investigation found that the “CSE spends over \$400 million a year, and employs about 2,000 people, almost half of whom are involved in intercepting phone conversations, and hacking into computer systems supposedly in other countries.”

This Was Never About “Terrorism” or “National Security”

When Bill C-51 was being pushed through parliament by Stephen Harper, Amnesty International, the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, the Canadian Muslim

Lawyers Association, the International Civil Liberties Monitoring Group, La Ligue des Droits et Libertés and the National Council of Canadian Muslim released an open statement which said, "Throughout the Parliamentary hearings on Bill C-51, not a single witness offered a concrete example of how the draconian measures in Bill C-51 would better protect public safety."

So if the laws aren't meant to ensure public safety, then why have them in the beginning?

There are numerous clear examples of the RCMP, CSIS and police force targeting peaceful social justice organizers under the justification of "fighting terrorism". So much so that it's obvious to many that the government of Canada is giving these forces more tools to target dissent, not to protect anybody from the minimal terrorist threat which exists in Canada.

What Are the Real Targets?

We previously covered the BC Civil Liberties Association's lawsuit against CSIS for spying against peaceful groups organizing against new oil pipelines. CSIS tried unsuccessfully to keep the contents of the lawsuit secret. BCCLA Executive Director Josh Paterson detailed how CSIS documents reveal the agency was watching people and groups opposed to pipeline expansion - including a small gathering in a Kelowna church basement and the All Native Basketball Tournament in Prince Rupert.

"The information seems to have been shared between different agencies, including the RCMP, the National Energy Board and even to oil and pipeline companies," he observed. "That is not the job of Canada's spy and police agencies, to be reporting to corporations on the democratic activities of citizens."

A June 29 Toronto Star article titled, "Trans Mountain protesters warned they may already be under surveillance" notes that, "Once a person's information is in the hands of the RCMP or CSIS, Canadian national security law also allows it to be shared between a wide range of government departments under certain circumstances. Bill C-59, which recently received royal assent, grants permission to do so if the person in question is involved in 'significant or widespread interference' with critical infrastructure."

The article also quotes Brenda McPhail, director of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association's privacy, technology and surveillance project, who explained how the new language in Bill C-59 can be used to target organizers, "Increasingly, security forces view protests as potential sites of violence rather than constitutionally protected spaces to express dissatisfaction or political opinion."

The article then continues, "Through their ATIP [Access to Information and Privacy

Requests], Walby and Jeffrey Monaghan, an assistant professor at Carleton University's Institute for Criminology and Criminal Justice, found CSIS and the RCMP take part in semi-annual meetings with energy industry representatives called Utility and Energy Sector Stakeholder briefings. The energy representatives all possessed security clearances allowing them to view classified intelligence." Do we need more proof that the government of Canada and its security and law enforcement institutions are agents of Capitalist corporations and their profit-driven market economy?

Use Them Or Lose Them

So the government of Canada obviously and conclusively feels more accountable to oil company executives than to the working and poor people who are targeted by this growing web of confusing laws, government agencies and rubber stamp oversight bodies. The obvious effect is that people become fearful of organizing or expressing critical opinions for fear of being targeted. This

"chilling effect" could have a devastating impact on the right to freedom of speech and assembly. We need as many people as possible demonstrating as often as possible to make sure the government isn't able to scare us all into silence. We also need the unions, civil liberty and human rights organizations who played a large role in the original mass protests against Bill C-51 to do the same against Bill C-59. The democratic and human rights consequences are the same regardless if it's Conservative Harper or Liberal Trudeau; they are the two sides of the same coin. Legendary anti-apartheid fighter Nelson Mandela said, "I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it." He and millions of black South Africans fought against unjust laws and against all odds defeated apartheid. We need to use this example and keep fighting. We will win.

Trudeau, Respect Our Human Rights!

Follow Thomas on Twitter:
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DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK. WHAT DO WE DO? STAND UP FIGHT BACK! CAMPAIGN TO REPEAL BILL C-51 & C-59 STILL IN THE STREETS

By Thomas Davies

The Working Group to Stop Bill C-51 continued its bi-weekly petition campaign during the month of June with an eye on the Senate, where Bill C-59 was moving towards being passed as law before the end of the parliamentary session.

Knowing full well that Bill C-59 doesn't come anywhere close to the promised "fix" of Bill C-51, the 215th picket at 22nd Street Station in New

Westminster and 216th picket at Scott Road Station in Surrey were no less important. Just as in the weeks, months, and years previous - the Working Group continues to find both interest and indignation from many people who

had hoped that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau would follow through on his election campaign promises to respect democratic and human rights.



On June 21, 2019 the Liberal government's Bill C-59 received "Royal Assent" and officially became law in Canada. This is another step backwards for human rights in Canada, and the Working Group is now committed to the ongoing campaign to repeal both Bill C-51 and

Bill C-59!

REPEAL BILL C-51 & BILL C-59!

OUR SECURITY LIES IN DEFENDING THE RIGHTS OF ALL!

Albert "Ginger" Goodwin

May 10, 1887 Treeton, England -
July 27, 1918 Cumberland, BC, Canada

Albert "Ginger" Goodwin was a coal miner, trade-union leader, socialist, and anti-war activist. He was shot and killed in the woods surrounding Cumberland, BC by a government-hired mercenary while avoiding forced conscription to the army in 1918.

The Vancouver General Strike on August 2, 1918, was called in protest of Ginger's murder. It was the first General Strike in Canada and an important precursor to the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. An unknown person made a gravestone for Ginger which remains in Cumberland, BC with a hammer and sickle and the inscription "Ginger Goodwin - A Worker's Friend".



A Working Class Leader and Hero

WWW.FIRETHISTIME.NET

of being the victim of a violent crime, overrepresentation in foster homes, subpar living conditions on reserves – the policy of the federal government for at least two decades has been one of reconciliation and redress.”

It is not enough to say Prime Minister Harper apologized for residential schools’ genocidal behaviour and Prime Minister Trudeau talks about reconciliation all the time. What have these words meant for the living standards and human rights of Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people? Have their murder rates gone down? No! In fact, according to the most recent Statistics Canada reports the rate of homicide against Indigenous women increased by 32% in 2017 from 2016.

What does “reconciliation and redress” mean for prison incarceration rates of Indigenous people? What does it mean for the high-school completion rates of Indigenous people? What does it mean for the life expectancy of Indigenous people? What does it mean for the reserves in Canada who do not have clean drinking water and are under boil-water advisory or do not consume orders?

Where does the Toronto Star get the nerve to talk about two decades of “reconciliation and redress,” when the statistics all point to systemic inequality, violence, and denial of basic human rights for Indigenous nations in Canada?

Why does this matter?

This article has not focused on the inquiry’s “Calls for Justice” or the hundreds of stories collected through the inquiry from families and loved ones of the missing and murdered over the past three years. These are also important areas of research and discussion. Instead, this article is focused on questioning the unresearched and heavily biased role the mainstream capitalist media plays in the discussions about Indigenous issues across Canada. If the average person in Canada relies on these newspapers or news media for their thoughts and opinions, it is almost assured that the national discussion on improving the lives and empowering Indigenous women,

girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA folks will stall and like after so many other reports, gather dust on a shelf somewhere.

In fact, the inquiry’s “Calls to Justice” have a specific section dedicated to “Media and Social Influencers”. These call for more Indigenous voices to be included in the media. A few mainstream media outlets have made more of an effort. The June 27 edition of the *Now Toronto Newspaper* boldly reads, “Missing and Murdered: Canada’s Genocide” on the cover and features editorial articles from 3 prominent Indigenous journalists regarding the Inquiry and media backlash. *Canadian Lawyer Magazine* published, “Canada’s treatment of Indigenous peoples fits the definition of ‘genocide’” (June 10, 2019), and even the right-wing *National Post Newspaper* published the article I quoted previously, “MMIW inquiry drew from 98 earlier reports. The same problems and unrealized solutions echo through them all” (June 7, 2019). Of course, these articles are written by individual journalists, not written and approved by the entire editorial board, which is another sort of statement for a publication to make.

What’s next?

In *Fire This Time* Volume 9 Issue 12 (December 2015) I wrote an article titled, “Spotlight on Val-d’Or Quebec: A case of extreme or everyday injustice for Indigenous women across Canada?”

I wrote about the need for an independent public inquiry into the cases of murdered and missing Indigenous women. I explained, “Of course, an inquiry is not what is going to change the situation for Indigenous women in Canada. That would be wishful thinking. The inquiry is a chance for Aboriginal women and their communities to come together and evaluate the situation they face in Canada and to come up with concrete demands for the government of Canada, the provinces, the territories, the police forces and whoever else they decide needs to be held to account.

This is a chance for Indigenous women and their communities to determine their own future, rather than have it dictated to them by politicians and police who think they

know what’s best. Over 200 years of the ‘Canada knows what’s best’ strategy has only succeeded in dehumanizing and marginalizing Indigenous women and their communities. This inquiry is a chance for them to clarify their needs and demands so that they can come together as Indigenous women and so that all allies who believe in social justice and equality across Canada can fight alongside them for their demands.”

Despite any shortcomings of the NIMMIWG, the final report, and the “Calls for Justice” – the decision to state plainly that “Canada’s past and current colonial policies, actions and inactions towards Indigenous Peoples is genocide,” is an important outcome of the inquiry. This means that government inaction is, in fact, killing Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people. If the government of Canada does not work actively towards empowerment and self-determination for Indigenous nations, Canada will continue along its genocidal path.

In his Canada Day speech on July 1, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stated, “As a country, it’s important that we celebrate our accomplishments. That we take pride in how far we’ve come. But we can’t forget that Canada did not happen by accident and won’t continue without effort and hard work.” It is very true that Canada did not happen by accident, and neither did its laws and policies towards Indigenous people, nor their devastating consequences. Imperialist Canada’s policies of colonization, assimilation, marginalization, inequality, and denial of basic human rights have not happened and do not continue to happen by accident.

Our responsibility as allies of Indigenous Nations in Canada is to recognize that the attempted colonial genocide against Indigenous people has not ended. Implementing the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; the 231 Calls to Justice from the NIMMIWG; and demanding the government of Canada to abide by its signature on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples are all important first steps towards forcing Canada to change its genocidal policies towards Indigenous nations. We must also stand alongside Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people who are under direct, disproportionate, and violent threats by defending their rights and demands for justice and self-determination.



Left to Right: “The Scream” a painting by Cree/Irish artist, Kent Monkman; Vancouver’s Annual March for missing and murdered women February 14, 2017.

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Continued from page 5 "Saudi Arabia"

as a destabilizing and destructive force in the Middle East and North Africa in favour of imperialist countries especially the United States.

As the Saudi government defines its relation with the United States in the website of its own embassy in Washington DC: "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States of America have a longstanding relationship dating back to the 1930s, when American businessmen first traveled to the Kingdom to help develop the country's natural resources. Today, the Saudi-U.S. relationship is stronger than ever. On issues of national security and economic opportunity, the Saudi-U.S. relationship is vital. The Kingdom remains one of America's closest allies and strongest economic partners in the Middle East."

Saudi Arabia is in fact an important ally for the U.S. expansion and hegemony in the Middle East and North Africa. The Saudi regime is a friend of imperialists, and a foe of anti-imperialist and liberation movements, a foe of Palestinians' aspiration for freedom and self-determination.

Recently the England-based website, The Middle East Monitor stated that Saudi Arabia has bought \$300 million worth of spy software from Israel, a deal which includes small tracking devices that can be placed in the target's mobile phone. Saudi Arabia is betraying the Palestinian cause, buying Israeli spyware to harass and persecute their own people and Palestinians. The cooperation between the Israeli and Saudi regimes extends to military, information, and security throughout the whole Middle East and North Africa. Both countries collaborated and coordinated the war against Syria's Bashar Assad government and the people of Syria from the outset of the war. For instance, while Saudi Arabia paid the ISIS/ISIL terrorist fighters in Syria, Israel was treating them and providing medical care when they were injured in Israel (UK Independent).

Saudi Arabian Regime: An Enemy of People

As peace-loving people around the world, it is our duty to stand with the people of Saudi Arabia in their fight for democratic and human rights. We must stand with the people of the Middle East and North Africa who suffered from the war mongering of the Saudi regime for more than forty years from Afghanistan to Iran and Iraq, and from Libya and Syria to the ongoing genocide against the people of Yemen. We must expose and condemn this imperialist den that created and founded terrorist groups from Al Qaida to ISIS/ISIL and Daesh to spread hatred, genocide, destruction and the killing of hundreds of thousands of innocent people in the Middle East and North Africa. And of course, we must condemn the human rights abuses committed by the Saudi regime when it meddles in the internal affairs of other countries throughout the region. We must hold respective governments in Europe, Canada, and the U.S. accountable for their silence and complicity with Saudi regime.

Brave human rights activists in Saudi Arabia continue to speak up despite all of the persecution, jailing, and threats against their lives, which they are subjected to by the Saudi regime. The brave people of Yemen continue to resist the criminal war and blockade on their country despite being victims of daily bombing and aggression by the Saudi-led coalition.

Poor and oppressed people in the Middle East and North Africa share the aspiration for independence, freedom, and prosperity. Fighting for a brighter future is standing up against despotic U.S. puppet regimes, like Saudia Arabia, in the region.

From Sana'a to Riyadh to London to Ottawa and Washington, we demand:

Imperialists Out of the Middle East and North Africa!

Saudi and U.S. Stop Bombing Yemen!

U.S., Canada, and Europe Cancel All Arms Deals with Saudi Arabia!

Free Loujain Al-Hathloul and All Political Prisoners in Saudi Arabia!

Follow Azza on Twitter: @Azza_R14

Continued from page 7 "Venezuela"

struggle of Venezuelan people against the reactionary pro-imperialist right-wing opposition inside Venezuela and against the constant attack, sanctions, and interventions of imperialism, is to build a strong antiwar, anti-imperialist movement that also focuses on building a Venezuela solidarity movement in defence of self-determination for the Venezuelan people. We have no option and no responsibility other than to build an effective mass movement to defend Venezuelan people and their struggle against imperialist aggression, focusing especially on that of the United States and Canada. We have too many conferences, but not enough mass actions. We have too many discussion clubs and discussion circles, without militant actions. Why are so many groups and organizations supporting Venezuela, but not demonstrating unity in action? Together we can organize thousands of people in Washington DC and Ottawa, while the last two national and international protests in Washington DC brought only 700-1,000 people into the streets! The Venezuelan revolution and defending its independence have created a golden opportunity for progressive, leftist, pacifist, and all other human-loving activists to overcome this fragmentation. Working and oppressed people in the U.S. and Canada must hear us; must see us in united action in order to believe and join us. Let's remember the Civil Rights Movement, the anti-Vietnam war movement, the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) Movement. Yes, we can!

Final Thoughts and Conclusions

A recent article by Venezuela's Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza, printed in this issue of Fire This Time, clearly lays out our task as human-loving, progressive, anti-war people, "Venezuela is the epicentre of a historic dispute." Progressives, leftist intellectuals, and activists - rather than focusing on which way the Venezuelan revolution must develop and what the best options are for the leadership of the Bolivarian revolutionary process to take - must focus their efforts, time, and energy on building a strong and effective solidarity movement with the Venezuelan people and their revolutionary government.

Our job, as people outside of

Venezuela, is not to occupy ourselves with what is happening in Venezuela internally in terms of what is good or bad for Venezuelans. It is not our job to discover, just now, that the battle of imperialists with Venezuela is over plundering oil and natural resources - an obvious ambition of all colonial powers. Our job is to focus entirely on the war of imperialists against Venezuela as an independent country. With a little critical thinking, we need to clarify the objective situation and imperialist intentions for ourselves. Why have the U.S. and its imperialist allies imposed war and occupation since 2001 on Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and now threaten Iran? Are all of these wars, occupations, and sanctions really about oil and stealing resources? If one's response is yes, then we trap ourselves with simplistic thinking and completely misunderstanding the nature of imperialism and a deep unsolvable capitalist market system and economic crisis today.

At the root of all conflicts and battles of imperialist countries against independent countries including colonial and semi-colonial countries, is the drive to deny them their sovereignty and self-rule. Everything else is secondary.

We have very clearly seen that the heroic people of Venezuela and their revolutionary government, under Comandante Chavez and now democratically elected President Maduro, are extremely capable of dealing with all kinds of internal counter-revolutionary sabotage. We must immediately increase our effort to explain to the people in the advanced industrial countries that shortages of goods, food, medicine, and basic necessities are the result of inhuman, brutal and heavy imperialist sanctions and blockade. We must build a movement in defence of the Venezuelan people with the main slogan of "U.S., Canada and all other imperialists Hands Off Venezuela!" and "End the Blockade against Venezuela!" We must build a movement to defend the self-determination and sovereignty of Venezuela. Let's work and focus together in a united effort on these basic demands. We will win.

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MAWO Starts off Summer with Education, Organizing & Mobilizing Against War & Occupation!



By Janine Solanki

In today's world, there is no shortage of ongoing wars to demand an end to, and potential wars to prevent. Since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion and occupation of Afghanistan we have seen a new era of war and occupation carried out by imperialist countries. This has included the wars on Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen, U.S.-backed right-wing coups such as in Ukraine and the recent attempted coup in Venezuela, and brutal sanctions from Venezuela to Iran.

This year marks 70 years of NATO (the North Atlantic Treaty Organization), a dangerous military alliance. Since the horrific bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999, NATO has been increasingly used to wage imperialist wars, such as in Afghanistan and Libya, and are currently engaged in a military buildup in Eastern Europe. All of these NATO campaigns have been with heavy involvement from the Canadian military, who have inflicted death and destruction in these countries.

June 6 Picket

A protest action was held outside of Canada's Defence Minister MP Harjit Sajjan's office in Vancouver. The action, co-organized by Canadian Voice of Women for Peace (VOW) and Mobilization Against War and Occupation (MAWO), demanded "Canada out of NATO!" and for Canada to stop putting money into NATO while housing, jobs, healthcare and education suffer from a lack of funding here at home. This action was part of protests against NATO across Canada.

June 6 Forum

Later that same day, MAWO organized a public forum with the endorsement of VOW, titled "Making the Links: Militarism, War & the Climate Crisis". This event brought together two major crises facing our world, imperialist wars and occupations and the climate emergency. In both cases, the U.S. is the largest perpetrator. The U.S. military is the world's largest polluter; producing more hazardous waste than the five largest U.S. chemical companies combined; emitting more greenhouse gases than most countries; and contaminating the soil and water supply of military bases in the U.S., in over 800 foreign U.S. military bases, and in the countries which they invade, bomb and occupy.

The forum was chaired by Alison Bodine, MAWO's chairperson, and started out with a series of video clips highlighting the environmental impacts of the U.S. military. The first speaker was Tamara Lorincz, who is a PhD candidate at Balsillie School of International Affairs, Wilfrid Laurier University, a member of the Canadian Voice of Women for Peace and the No to NATO 2019

Campaign. Lorincz gave a comprehensive account of how the U.S. military and NATO are not only inflicting war on people around the world but polluting the earth on a massive scale. The following speaker, Thomas Davies, is an organizer with Climate Convergence Vancouver and MAWO, as well as author of "System Change Not Climate Change" (Battle of Ideas Press, 2019). Davies spoke about the necessity to build a broad and united movement of both climate justice activists and antiwar activists, and to realize the potential that this movement has together. The event wrapped up with a discussion period and concluded that more collaboration between antiwar and climate justice organizations is to come.

June 28 Rally

Later in the month, MAWO also held a monthly antiwar rally and petition campaign. The June 28 action was held at the busy downtown Vancouver plaza in front of the Vancouver Art Gallery, and focused on demanding "No War on Iran!" and "Hands Off Yemen!".

In addition to harsh sanctions and increasing provocations, U.S. President Trump has announced that the U.S. government will be sending 1,000 more troops to the Middle East, adding to the Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier and B-52 bombers already headed towards Iran. As the U.S. dangerously threatens war against Iran, in Yemen four years of a U.S.-backed, Saudi-led war is still raging. The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) reported in June that since 2015 nearly 100,000 people have been killed, while 12 million more people that are living on the edge of starvation.

Protesters at the June 28 action held picket signs and antiwar banners, handed out antiwar literature to passers-by, and collected signatures on a petition demanding Canada end its \$15 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia. Alongside Saudi Arabia buying weapons from Canada on a regular basis, this particular arms deal is for so-called "light armoured vehicles" which are in reality heavily weaponized military vehicles.

To find out about upcoming antiwar events and actions, visit www.mawovancouver.org or follow on Facebook and Twitter @MAWOVan

"By Any Means Necessary..."



MALCOLM X SPEAKS

"This was mass murder in the Congo, of women and children and babies. But there was no outcry even from the white liberals, even from your 'friends.' Why? Because they made it appear that it was a humanitarian project. They said that the planes were being flown by 'American-trained anti-Castro Cuban pilots.' This is propaganda, too. Soon as you hear that it's American-trained, you say, 'Oh that's all right, that's us.' And the anti-Castro Cubans, 'Oh that's all right too, 'cause if they're against Castro, whoever else they're against that's good, 'cause Castro is a monster.' But you see how step-by-step they grab your mind?

And these pilots are hired, their salaries are paid by the United States government. They're called mercenaries, these pilots are. And a mercenary is not someone who kills you because he's patriotic. He kills you for blood money, he's a hired killer. This is what a mercenary means. And they're able to take these hired killers, put them in American planes, with American bombs, and drop them on African villages, blowing to bits Black men, Black women, Black children, Black babies, and you Black people sitting over here cool like it doesn't even involve you. You're a fool. They'll do it to them today, and do it to you tomorrow. Because you and I and they are all the same.

They call it a humanitarian project and that they're doing it in the name of freedom. And all of this, these glorious terms, are used to pave the way in your mind for what they're going to do."

– "Speech at the Ford Auditorium" (1965)



**by Jorge
Arreaza
Montserrat
Venezuelan
Foreign
Minister**

Without a doubt, the aggression that has been carried out in the past months against democracy and social peace, and against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, are unparalleled in the tense relations between the peoples of Our America and the dominant corporate elite of the U.S. This comprehensive, unconventional war unleashed against the Venezuelan people is the current expression of a complex historic struggle that has different fronts and expressions:

- Economically, through the attack by national capitalist sectors in combination with the unrelenting and inhumane commercial blockade imposed by the Trump administration;
- Information warfare, through the creation of false narratives to discredit Venezuelan institutions and confuse global public opinion;
- War itself, on the ground, with intelligence agencies from foreign countries acting to stoke military conspiracies, buy consciences, organize and train armed groups to impinge upon peace in the country;
- The ideological front, which brings back everything from the anachronistic Monroe Doctrine to the most antiquated anti-socialist arguments from the Cold War, in a sort of 21st century McCarthyism, through systematic attacks on models of democratic socialism, with the goal of inducing their failure and comparing them to the “successes” of savage neoliberal capitalism;
- And the international political and

diplomatic front, through which the bureaucracy of the State Department, relying on bodies such as the Departments of the Treasury and Defense, as well as National Security Advisors, has been deployed in an outpouring of anti-diplomacy to pressure, extort and attempt, through every means available, to isolate the Venezuelan State from the international system, in multilateral bodies and in the capitals of practically every country on the planet.



Understanding the Historical Conflict

It is impossible to analyze the socio-political reality in Venezuela without understanding the roots of the historic ongoing conflict. On one side, it should be noted that Our Latin America and Caribbean is a continent in permanent dispute. From the 18th century, long before hoisting their known doctrines of annexationist domination, the “founding fathers” of the United States of America had already warned that once their population had grown sufficiently, they would seize the dominions of the Spanish crown in Spanish America, one by one. Despite the North American country having fought for its independence against the British Empire, it never

supported the processes of independence of Spanish colonies, which were similar to its own, at least in principle. Even from then, those in Washington did not want to see free peoples rise, they wanted to conquer the entire continent and exercise dominion over what they called the Western Hemisphere. The Monroe Doctrine, Manifest Destiny, the Roosevelt Corollary, the Pan-American and Inter-American systems, coups d'états, invasions, interventions of all types, military bases, the false war on drugs, directly seizing territories and countless more: the objective has always been the same.

The imperialist-expansionist nature the United States would acquire was already being preconfigured when in 1829, Simón Bolívar, the geopolitical prophet, denounced that “the United States appears destined by providence to plague America with miseries in the name of liberty.” It is thus a question of the right of free peoples and nations to exist, versus accepting, with resignation, to be a simple domain of the U.S. empire, enslaved and at the services of the fluctuations of capital's social control.

In the center of this dispute, which has known neither respite nor truce, is Venezuela. Our country, for geographic and geopolitical reasons, has great riches, and even more importantly, it has a rebellious, liberating, anti-imperialist people by origin and by definition. European conquistadores crossed South America several times in search of the famous “El Dorado.” Although they didn't realize it for 4 centuries, the lands they desperately searched for are those that belong to the sacred territory of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Nevertheless, near the end of the 19th century, as the jaws of the U.S. empire were being developed, the appearance of oil and its uses attracted greed towards the country's immense energy riches.



Mural of Nicolás Maduro, Simón Bolívar and Hugo Chávez in Caracas, Venezuela



Venezuelan woman voting in the May 2018 Presidential Elections

Every Venezuelan government that stuck its head out in the 20th century, even if it was no more than a flash of a sovereign policy relating to the oil industry's profits, was destabilized and overthrown by the work and grace of the dominant corporate elite in Washington. Historic tension and contradiction became maximized when Hugo Chávez reached political power in 1999, this time thanks to the work and grace of the Venezuelan people, and we entered the 21st century with a policy of true and radical nationalization of industries linked to natural resources. The first years of this new phase of the historic dispute produced visceral rebellions of the national bourgeoisie, openly supported by Washington, that included the 2002 coup d'état and the sabotage of the oil industry, among many other chapters of this stage that is still in development. Imperialist actors have sought, by any means available to them, to overthrow and eliminate the Bolivarian Revolution, to retake political control of the country, so that the riches of Venezuelans can once again be used as tribute to benefit transnational capital.

Hugo Chávez and the Bolivarian Revolution invested, for the first time, the nation's great riches into the great needs of the people. Through what are called Social Missions, inexcusable social debts in health, housing, education, infrastructure, culture, nutrition, productive work, industrial production and others were addressed. U.S. governments, the main political face of global corporate empire, have intensified their obsessive determination to resolve this historic struggle in Venezuela in favor of capital. Every political, economic and social situation of the past years can be explained on the basis of the confrontation of models and the fight to retake or hold onto political power in Venezuela. Every situation has been a real chapter of this passionate book, in which a people are attacked in a thousand ways to force their surrender and hand over power, their power, to their historic exploiters.

Simplistic and reductionist analyses, based on manuals crafted in laboratories in

Washington and broadcast with sensationalist and inhumane venom by major media outlets in the service of imperialism and the status quo, are useless. What is happening in Venezuela is not a democracy-dictatorship dilemma, nor is it a human rights issue, nor is it defined by the personalization between Nicolás Maduro versus the opposition bourgeois leader du jour anointed by the White House.

It is a question, as was mentioned beforehand, of another chapter in the historic struggle between a people that is decided on being free and independent, against an empire determined to dominate it through national and global actors subjected to their interests. In understanding this premise, one can understand, through a scientific and realist approach, the dynamic events that are publicized through biased and skewed headlines in the West.

The Current Chapter in the Dispute

This chapter of the historic dispute was triggered in February 2018, when Washington gave direct orders to the Venezuelan opposition delegation to not to sign the comprehensive accord that was a product of a process of dialogue carried out for months in the Dominican Republic. We have lived with the consequences with since January of this year. An ongoing coup d'état, with the permanent threat of military invasion, in the middle of a savage and criminal financial and commercial blockade, for which the intellectual and material authors openly accept responsibility. The authorship of the crimes against Venezuela has been proudly claimed by members of the Trump administration: Donald Trump himself, Mike Pence, John Bolton, Mike Pompeo, Elliott Abrams, Greg Faller, Marco Rubio; with the addition of a few Latin American "presidents" and governments, who in reality are nothing more than links subordinated to the White House's chain of command and who attempt to have the region join this unconventional war.

Never before have spokespersons and high-level officials of any U.S. government so openly and publicly presented themselves as the leaders and promoters of a coup, a blockade and the threats of war against Venezuela. This

U.S. President Trump meeting with Fabiana Rosales, wife of Juan Guaido, at the White House, March 27, 2019



contrasts with the traditional format of coups and processes of political destabilization in Latin America and the Caribbean, in which, although the CIA and U.S. governments have always been the intellectual authors and financiers, they maintained the formality of giving the media limelight to the military and political bourgeois elite of our countries, so as not to be so brazen.

Among the threats and warmongering declarations by Security Advisor John Bolton to seek to strangle the Venezuelan people, collapse the economy and instill regime change by force, it is worth highlighting the admission of the true objectives of this imperialist onslaught: once the change in government occurs, U.S. oil companies are already ready to enter Venezuela to produce. To complete the strategy, the Venezuelan bourgeoisie in the National Assembly, which never discusses any legislation in the service of the people, once against places itself in Washington's camp in this permanent dispute, and devotes itself to discussing and approving laws to allow transnational businesses to exploit natural resources on their own, contravening the National Constitution; to purporting to have Venezuela reenter outdated mechanisms of military cooperation with the United States in order to facilitate an imperialist military intervention; and to their permanent requests to impose more restrictive measures, wrongly called sanctions, against the financial and industrial institutions of the Venezuelan state, restricting institutional capacity and facilitating the criminal blockade against the economy, against all of the Venezuelan people.

Although the comprehensive war against Venezuela is in full swing, imperialist aggression has been lurching and has gone from one stumble to another, from failure to failure, underestimating the Venezuelan people and their will to be independent and free. The Bolivarian Revolution is not a party or a circumstantial partisan coalition; it does not depend upon nor rely on any economic power or corporation; it is not a bureaucratic caste attached to power. The Revolution is a sociopolitical, cultural phenomenon that

relies on the inexorable support of majorities traditionally excluded from decision making, and its roots extend to the deepest parts of the historic identity of the Venezuelan people. There is no empire, and there never will be, no matter how powerful, capable of erasing from the face of the earth, a social body and process so entrenched as Chavismo. Despite the perversity of the smear campaigns, despite the political hate they attempt to create, despite the resources they have allocated, despite the threats they have made, despite the blockade they have imposed, they are destined to fail.

The Dialogue to Generate Mechanisms for Conflict Management

Among Venezuelans, including the bourgeoisie and its representatives, regardless of the differences we may have, we must design and develop mechanisms for the management of this historic struggle, to reach agreements of coexistence and cohabitation and to advance in the regularization of this conflict for the control and destiny of the nation's riches and the protagonism or invisibilization of the majorities. Agreements that, without ignoring the underlying differences and processes of struggle, protect the nation's peace and independence, permanently removing military threats (whether external or internal) and imperialist attacks against our economy. Agreements that allow for the productive apparatus and system of social protection to work, without suffering from the consequences of the ambition of capital to control the fate of the country. For Venezuelans to be able to study, work and feel as though their social rights are guaranteed and democratized, without imposed tensions and situations that affect life in society.

It should be the people, freely, that decides, that elects, the path to follow, based on conditions of respect for our sovereignty. In all the electoral challenges to come, the bourgeoisie should present their neoliberal economic policy and privatizations without feeling ashamed. The people are the ones to evaluate and contrast it with the socialist project, without intervention, without imminent war, without campaigns of lies and distortion. As the Liberator said: "I have irrefragable proof of the perspicacity of the people in great affairs, and that is why I have always preferred their opinion to those of the wise." While the Bolivarian Revolution is in power, the people will always have the first and last word in defining the path and fate of our society.

We have had processes of political dialogue with the opposition in 2014, 2016, 2017-2018

and now in 2019. These conversations have been maintained despite political violence, protagonist interference by Washington in recurrent conspiracies, and reactions by the State in the face of aggressions. For understanding to bear transcendent, real fruit, the parties should comprehend, and we must begin from, the ongoing, structural character of the referred to dispute, and we must contribute to the construction and protection of the necessary political



Above: Sign reads "The Indigenous peoples in the vanguard defending the Bolivarian Revolution, long live Maduro" on the Day of Indigenous Resistance

Below: A school child with her laptop, provided as part of Venezuela's Canaima Plan which continues to provide laptops to students throughout Venezuela



mechanisms to achieve solid accords in the middle of our differences, which are sometimes irreconcilable. Those who wager on a simplistic, utilitarian dialogue for the benefits of the aggressors, or those who have interests in war, or in a process to remove a group from power or deny others access to it, once against err in the direction and the strategy, without considering the deep forces and radical contradictions that have defined political evolution and interaction in recent times.

It is not with a signature, a

timely election or an instructional, partial accord that such determinant differences can be processed and a lasting peace can be guaranteed. The solution can include options and agreements such as those, but they neither define it nor restrict it. We should be capable of seeing beyond that. Of raising our conduct, of meeting the challenges of history and the future. We should engage in politics from concrete reality, from our ideological positions, but always having human development as the goal, the Bolivarian objective of the greatest happiness possible. The solution should lead us to an ongoing and flexible mechanism for managing this historic conflict that has marked us and will mark us for decades.

President Nicolás Maduro will never tire of walking the path of dialogue, not to try and overcome a circumstantial obstacle or a specific situation, but rather to expand the horizons of peace and prosperity through the establishment of stable channels and methods for social, political and economic dialogue with opposition parties, with the working class, with people's power, with productive forces. Let us reach out to recognize each other, to understand each other and to respect each other in our differences and similarities. Let us not fear the contradictions that have been unleashed by events of our own making. Let us not ignore it, not underestimate it, not leave it to the side. Let us understand it with bravery and intelligence, and let us learn to manage, over the next decades, this constitutive conflict, this omnipresent dispute that has ruled us, with the wisdom and maturity demanded by the people of Venezuela, the peoples of Our America, the peoples who struggle, who resist and have the right to live in peace, in conditions of freedom and equality. That is to say, the right to overcome.

From: <http://mppre.gob.ve>

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Vancouver Solidarity Activists Stand with Venezuela Against Brutal U.S. Sanctions!

By Janine Solanki

On June 6

The U.S. government increased its brutal sanctions against Venezuela, announcing that exports of diluents to Venezuela are subject to U.S. sanctions. This not only sanctions U.S. companies from exporting diluents to Venezuela but also threatens secondary sanctions on non-U.S. entities. Diluents are a necessity for Venezuela's oil industry, which Venezuela's economy relies on and which funds important social programs in Venezuela. Venezuela's oil exports, which have already suffered greatly in recent years, just in May 2019 dropped 17% due to the U.S. sanctions. Despite this enormous economic stress of the U.S. blockade, Venezuela has not stopped their social programs, such as the "Canaima Plan" where students from primary grades to university are provided free laptops.

Another program being targeted by the U.S. government is the CLAP (Local Supply and Production Committees) food program, which provides regular deliveries of subsidized basic foodstuffs to six million Venezuelan families. In recent months the U.S. government has been preparing sanctions against companies and individuals involved in the program. Already the program is being impacted by the U.S. blocking shipments delivering goods to Venezuela. A recent report by the Center for Economic Policy Research also put the malicious intent of the U.S. blockade into figures, finding that U.S. sanctions amount to "collective punishment" and have been responsible for over 40,000 deaths between 2017 and 2018.

On June 11

The Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign held a monthly protest action demanding "U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela!" The action started with a picket

in front of the U.S. Consulate in downtown Vancouver, where protesters raised their voices and picket signs demanding an end to the U.S./Canada/EU sanctions on Venezuela. Speakers at the action also demanded that all charges be dropped against members of the Embassy Protection Collective who were arrested by the U.S. government in their heroic defense of Venezuela's sovereignty. For 37 days the Embassy Protection Collective protected the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, DC from being taken over by supporters of the U.S.-backed puppet of their failed coup attempt in Venezuela, self-declared "interim President" Juan Guaido.

From the U.S. Consulate, the protest moved to the busy downtown Robson street plaza, where an information table was set up and teams of activists approached passers-by with a petition against Canada's sanctions on Venezuela. A huge Venezuelan flag and a banner reading "U.S./Canada Hands Off Venezuela!" attracted people to the table, where they were able to sign petitions, pick up information and talk with organizers. While people stopped to ask questions about what is happening in Venezuela, organizers with Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign were able to share their experiences, from recent trips to Venezuela: including trips to observe the May 2018 Presidential elections, solidarity exchanges and conferences, and delegations to document the effects of the U.S. sanctions.

As the hostility and aggression of the United States, Canada and their allies grows the determination of the people of Venezuela to defend their sovereignty and self-determination is becoming more united and stronger. The Fire This Time Venezuela Solidarity Campaign stands with the people of Venezuela and the Bolivarian Revolution, and these actions and other events in defense of Venezuela will continue! For more info on upcoming events visit www.firethistime.net or follow on Facebook and Twitter @ftt_np or on Instagram at @FTT.Venezuela

MOTHER OF ALL STRUGGLES!

Indigenous struggle against colonialism



Howard Adams (Métis)
1921 - 2001

Revolutionary Métis Marxist scholar and professor Howard Adams grew up in a Métis community in Saskatchewan. He was a leader in the struggle for Indigenous rights, self-determination, and socialism.

"When a struggle threatens the colonizer, he immediately responds with increased oppression. Severely oppressed people who do not understand their oppression prefer domination. They refuse to listen to the call for freedom. Before they will become involved in struggle they must be able to perceive liberation as a real possibility and see that society is transformable. The struggle is advanced when they realize that the colonizer cannot exist without them. Once they realize they are the hosts of the oppressor, they begin to struggle.

The colonized and the colonizer are always polarized. Only through comradeship with the colonized can others understand their characteristic ways of living and behaving, which often reflect the structure of domination. The colonized cannot understand the order that serves the colonizer. This often results in violence – striking out at their own comrades. They have a belief in the invulnerability of the power of the oppressor.

The struggle for liberation must be a result of consciousness. It is a struggle for humanity."

- Excerpt from *Prison of Grass* (1975) Chapter 12 "Schooling the Redman"

SUPPORT THE EMBASSY PROTECTORS DEFENSE COMMITTEE!

Collecting funds for the Embassy Protectors who defended the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington, DC from U.S. government sponsored pro-coup Venezuelans for 37 days in the Spring of 2019.

Funds will go toward legal defense for the four members of the Embassy Protection Collective that have been charged with "interfering with protective services" and now face up to a year in jail and up to a \$100,000 fine, as well as other supporters.

[HTTPS://DEFENDEMBASSYPROTECTORS.ORG](https://defendembassyprotectors.org)



By Janine Solanki

"We cannot be indifferent to what happens anywhere in the world, for a victory by any country over imperialism is our victory; just as any country's defeat is a defeat for all of us."

-Ernesto "Che" Guevara

These words are a few of the many profound thoughts shared by revolutionary hero Che Guevara. This leader of the Cuban Revolution, of Argentinian origin, not only spoke but acted upon these words. After the triumph of the 1959 Cuban Revolution, he joined revolutionary struggles in Congo and Bolivia, where he was murdered by CIA. June 14 would have marked his birthday, which in Cuba and here in Vancouver is an opportunity to celebrate a hero whose example continues to inspire millions of people in the fight for a better world.

On June 14

Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC) held an event to celebrate the birthday of Che Guevara, with special guests direct from Cuba! The packed event started out with an introduction by Tamara Hansen, coordinator of VCSC, before the program began with a series of video clips outlining the exceptional life of Che Guevara. To welcome the Cuban guests to Indigenous territory, Coast Salish elder Kelly White shared a song and drummed, raising her voice in a solidarity call of "Viva Cuba!" Participants were then treated to a poem paying tribute to Che Guevara by Mayra Climaco, a Nicaraguan poet, social justice activist and former Sandinista fighter. Another beautiful poem was shared by Macarena Cataldo, a Chilean poet and activist with Proyecto Cultural Sur

– Vancouver. The program also included greetings from Jaime Coreas on behalf of the FMLN Vancouver.

The audience then heard from the featured Cuban speakers, beginning with Sandra Ramirez



Vancouver Cuba Solidarity Activists and Cuban Guests Celebrate the Birthday of Che Guevara!

Rodriguez, Director of the North America Desk of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP). Sandra spoke about how Che Guevara's legacy is reflected in the ongoing Cuban Revolution today. She was followed by Yamil Martinez Marrero from the Canada Desk of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), who talked about Che's central ideas of internationalism, which are practiced today in Cuba and reflected also in the Cuba solidarity movement.

On June 16

VCSC took these discussions from indoors to Vancouver's summer streets, with a table at two June festivals. On June 16, VCSC had a table at the Main Street Car Free Festival, an annual event drawing tens of thousands of people to 21 blocks of festivities. Many people



VCSC at the Main Street Car Free Festival. June 16, 2019

Cuban guests Sandra Ramirez Rodriguez and Yamil Martinez Marrero speaking at VCSC's Che Guevara Birthday Celebration. June 14, 2019.

followed the chalk lettering on the street reading "End the Blockade on Cuba!" and stopped at the VCSC information table to talk to organizers, get literature about Cuba and to sign a petition against the U.S. blockade on Cuba.

On June 22

VCSC was proud to have a table at the East Side Pride festival, as a community partner of the Vancouver Pride events happening throughout the season.

Many people were attracted to the table by a banner reading "Cuba Says: Sexual Diversity is not Dangerous! Homophobia and Transphobia are!" and a Cuban and Pride flag flying above the table together. Organizers talked to people about the advances Cuba has and is making for LGBTQAI2S+ rights, and many also signed on to the petition against the U.S. blockade against Cuba. VCSC was also scheduled in the program and brought a bit of Cuba to the event by contributing a salsa lesson! VCSC organizer Janine Solanki got the crowd up on their feet, learning salsa steps and dancing to Cuban music!

VCSC is taking advantage of the summer weather to bring Cuba solidarity to festivals and outdoor events – to find out more visit www.vancubasolidarity.com or follow on Facebook and Twitter @VanCuba_VCSC



VCSC at East Side Pride. June 22, 2019

VENEZUELA, **Epicentro de la** **Disputa** **Histórica**



**por Jorge
Arreaza
Montserrat
Canciller
de
Venezuela**

*** EN ESPAÑOL ***

Sin lugar a dudas, la agresión contra la democracia y la paz social que se ha desarrollado en los últimos meses en contra de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela no tienen parangón en las tensas relaciones entre los pueblos de Nuestra América y la élite corporativa dominante estadounidense. La Guerra integral, no convencional desatada contra el pueblo venezolano, expresión actual de una compleja pugna histórica tiene distintos frentes y expresiones:

- En lo económico, a través del ataque de los sectores capitalistas nacionales en combinación con el férreo e inhumano bloqueo comercial impuesto por la Administración Trump;
- La guerra comunicacional, a partir de la generación de falsas matrices para desprestigiar a la instituciones venezolanas y confundir a la opinión pública mundial;
- La guerra propiamente dicha, en el terreno, con las agencias de inteligencia de países extranjeros actuando para alimentar conspiraciones militares, comprar conciencias, organizar y entrenar grupos armados para atacar contra la paz del país;
- El frente ideológico, en el cual se retoman desde la anacrónica Doctrina Monroe hasta los más trasnochados argumentos anti socialistas de la Guerra Fría, en una especie de Macarthismo del siglo XXI, mediante el ataque sistemáticos a los modelos de socialismo democrático, con el objeto de inducir su fracaso y compararlos con el “exitoso” capitalismo neoliberal salvaje;
- Y el Frente Político Diplomático

Internacional, a través del cual la burocracia del Departamento de Estado, apoyándose en otros entes como los Departamentos del Tesoro, de Defensa y los Asesores de Seguridad, se han desplegado en un derroche anti diplomático, para presionar, extorsionar y tratar por todos los medios de aislar al Estado venezolano del sistema internacional, tanto en los entes multilaterales, como en las capitales de prácticamente todos los países del planeta.

Entender el conflicto histórico

No es posible analizar la realidad sociopolítica de Venezuela sin entender la raíz del conflicto histórico en desarrollo. Por un lado, debe considerarse que Nuestra América Latina y Caribeña es un continente en disputa permanente. Desde el siglo XVIII, mucho antes de enarbolar sus conocidas doctrinas de dominación anexionista, los “Padres Fundadores” de los Estados Unidos de América, ya advertían que, una vez que su población creciera lo suficiente, le arrebatarián a la corona española sus dominios en la América Hispana, uno a uno. A pesar de que el país norteamericano batalló por su independencia contra el imperio inglés, jamás apoyó los procesos de independencia de las colonias españolas, afines al suyo, al menos en principio. No querían ya entonces en Washington ver nacer pueblos libres, querían conquistar el continente todo y ejercer su dominio en lo que ellos consideran el hemisferio occidental. La Doctrina Monroe, el Destino Manifiesto, el Corolario Roosevelt, Sistemas Panamericano e Interamericano, golpes de estado, invasiones, intervenciones de todo tipo, bases militares, falsa lucha contra las drogas, arrebatar territorios directamente y pare usted de contar: el objetivo siempre ha sido el mismo.

Ya se preconfiguraba el carácter

imperialista – expansionista que adquiriría Estados Unidos y que ya en 1829 denunciaba Simón Bolívar, cual profeta geopolítico: “los Estados Unidos, que parecen destinados por la Providencia para plagar la América de miserias, en nombre de la libertad”. Se trata entonces del derecho a la existencia de pueblos y naciones libres, versus aceptar con resignación ser simples dominios del imperio estadounidense, esclavizados y al servicio del metabolismo de control social del capital.

En el centro de esta disputa histórica que no conoce pausa, ni tregua, se encuentra Venezuela. Nuestro país, por razones geográficas y geológicas, cuenta con grandes riquezas y más importante aún, cuenta con un Pueblo rebelde, libertario y antiimperialista de origen y por definición. Los conquistadores europeos cruzaron varias veces la América del Sur en búsqueda del famoso “Dorado”. Aunque no se percataron hace 4 siglos, esas tierras que buscaban con desesperación, son las que hoy pertenecen al sagrado territorio de la República Bolivariana de Venezuela. Sin embargo, ya a finales del siglo XIX, en la medida en que se desarrollaban las fauces del imperio estadounidense, la aparición del petróleo y sus usos logró atraer todas las codicias hacia la inmensa riqueza energética del país.

Todos los gobiernos venezolanos que durante el siglo XX asomaron, aunque fuera una relampagueante política soberana en relación con las ganancias de la industria petrolera, fueron desestabilizados y derrocados por obra y gracia de la élite corporativa dominante en Washington. La tensión y contradicción histórica se maximiza cuando, esta vez por obra y gracia del Pueblo de Venezuela, Hugo Chávez llega al poder político en 1999 y entramos en el siglo XXI con una política de verdadera y radical nacionalización de las industrias vinculadas a los recursos naturales. Ya en los primeros años de esta nueva fase de la disputa histórica se produjeron viscerales rebeliones de la burguesía nacional, apoyada abiertamente por Washington, que incluyeron

Foto de Hugo Chávez y Simón Bolívar, en una manifestación en apoyo del gobierno Maduro. 4 de agosto 2017, Caracas, Venezuela



el Golpe de Estado de 2002, el sabotaje a la industria petrolera, entre otros muchos capítulos de esta etapa aún en desarrollo. Los actores imperialistas han procurado, por todos los medios a su alcance, derrocar y liquidar la Revolución Bolivariana, para retomar el control político del país, para que las riquezas de los venezolanos y venezolanas se vuelvan a tributarle beneficios al capital transnacional.

Hugo Chávez y la Revolución Bolivariana invirtieron por primera vez en la gran riqueza nacional, en las grandes necesidades del Pueblo. A través de las denominadas Misiones Sociales se abordaron deudas sociales insólitas en la salud, la vivienda, la educación, la infraestructura, la cultura, la alimentación, el trabajo productivo, la producción industrial, entre otras muchas. Los gobiernos estadounidenses, principal rostro político del imperio corporativo mundial, han acentuado su empeño obsesivo en resolver esta pugna histórica en Venezuela a favor del capital. Toda coyuntura política, económica y social en los últimos años, puede explicarse a partir de la confrontación de modelos y la disputa por retomar o conservar el poder político en Venezuela. Todos han sido episodios reales de este libro apasionante, en el que un Pueblo es atacado de mil maneras, para que se rinda y le entregue el poder, su poder, a sus antiguos explotadores.

Son inútiles los análisis simplistas y reduccionistas, plasmados en manuales elaborados por laboratorios en Washington y difundidos con veneno sensacionalista e inhumano por los grandes medios de comunicación al servicio del imperialismo y el statu quo. Lo que ocurre en Venezuela no es un dilema democracia – dictadura, ni un asunto de Derechos Humanos, ni se define por la personalización entre Nicolás Maduro versus el dirigente de turno de la oposición burguesa ungido por la Casa Blanca. Se trata, como nos hemos referido, de otro capítulo de la disputa histórica entre un pueblo que está decidido a ser libre e independiente, contra un imperio empeñado en dominarlo a través de actores nacionales y mundiales, sometidos a sus intereses. Entendiendo esta premisa, se pueden explicar y comprender desde una aproximación científica y realista, los dinámicos acontecimientos que se divulgan a través de tendenciosos y sesgados titulares en occidente.

El capítulo actual de la disputa

Desde el mes de febrero del año 2018, cuando Washington dio la orden directa para que la delegación de la oposición venezolana se negara a firmar el acuerdo integral producto del proceso de diálogo llevado adelante en la República Dominicana durante meses, se activó este capítulo de la disputa histórica, cuyas secuelas hemos vivido desde enero de este año. Un Golpe de Estado en proceso, con una amenaza permanente de invasión militar en medio de un salvaje y criminal bloque financiero y comercial, cuyos autores

intelectuales y materiales dan la cara sin máscaras. La autoría de los crímenes contra Venezuela ha sido orgullosamente reivindicada por los miembros de la propia administración Trump: el propio Donald Trump, Mike Pence, John Bolton, Mike Pompeo, Elliott Abrams, Greg Faller, Marco Rubio; con el agregado de algunos “presidentes” y gobiernos latinoamericanos que en realidad no son más



que eslabones subordinados de la cadena de mando de la Casa Blanca y que tratan de sumar a la región a esta guerra no convencional.

Nunca antes los voceros y funcionarios de alto nivel del gobierno alguno de EEUU se habían presentado tan abierta y públicamente como los dirigentes y promotores de un Golpe, del Bloqueo y de las amenazas de guerra contra Venezuela. Esto contrasta con el formato tradicional de los golpes y procesos de desestabilización política en América Latina y el Caribe, en los cuales, si bien la CIA y los gobiernos estadounidenses siempre han sido autores intelectuales y financistas, guardaban las formas al darle protagonismo mediático a militares o políticos de las élites burguesas de nuestros países, para no ser tan evidentes.

De entre todas las amenazas y declaraciones guerrilleras del Asesor de Seguridad, John Bolton, para procurar ahogar al pueblo venezolano, hacer colapsar la economía y forzar un cambio de gobierno por la fuerza, destaca el reconocimiento de los verdaderos objetivos de esta arremetida imperialista: las empresas petroleras norteamericanas ya están listas para entrar a producir en Venezuela cuando ocurra el cambio de gobierno. Para completar la estrategia, la burguesía venezolana en la Asamblea Nacional que jamás discute legislación alguna al servicio del Pueblo, vuelve a ubicarse a

favor de Washington en el desarrollo de la disputa permanente y se dedica a discutir y aprobar leyes para permitir que las empresas transnacionales puedan explotar recursos naturales por su cuenta, contraviniendo la Constitución Nacional; como también pretenden que Venezuela reingrese en vetustos mecanismos de cooperación militar con Estados Unidos, para facilitar la intervención militar imperialista; aparte de su permanente solicitud para que se impongan más medidas restrictivas, mal llamadas sanciones, contra las instituciones financieras e industriales del Estado venezolano, para restringir la capacidad institucional y facilitar el criminal bloqueo contra la economía, contra el pueblo venezolano todo.

Aunque la guerra integral contra Venezuela está en pleno desarrollo, la agresión imperialista ha ido dando tumbos y va de torpeza en torpeza, de fracaso en fracaso, subestimando al pueblo venezolano y su voluntad de independencia y libertad. La Revolución Bolivariana no es un partido o una coalición partidista circunstancial, no depende ni responde a ningún poder o corporación económica, ni es tampoco una casta burocrática aferrada al poder. La Revolución es un fenómeno sociopolítico, cultural que cuenta con el apoyo inexorable de las mayorías tradicionalmente excluidas de la toma de decisiones, y cuyas raíces se extienden hasta lo más profundo de la identidad histórica del pueblo de Venezuela. No existe, ni existirá, imperio, por poderoso que sea, capaz de borrar de la faz de la tierra, un cuerpo y un proceso social tan arraigado como el del Chavismo. Por más campañas perversas de desprestigio, por más odio político que pretendan generar, por más recursos que le dediquen, por más amenazas que lancen, por más bloqueos que impongan, están destinados a fracasar.

El diálogo para generar mecanismos de administración del conflicto

Es entre los venezolanos y venezolanas, incluyendo a la burguesía y sus representantes, a pesar de todas las diferencias que podamos mantener, que debemos diseñar y desarrollar mecanismos para la administración de esta disputa histórica, para lograr acuerdos de coexistencia y convivencia, para avanzar en la regularización de este conflicto por el control y el destino de la riqueza nacional y el protagonismo o invisibilización de las mayorías. Acuerdos que, sin ignorar las diferencias y el proceso de pugna subyacente, protejan la paz y la independencia nacional, alejando para siempre las amenazas militares (externas o internas) y los ataques imperialistas contra nuestra economía. Acuerdos que permitan funcionar el aparato productivo y el sistema de protección social, sin sufrir las consecuencias de la ambición del capital por controlar los destinos del país. Que los venezolanos y venezolanas puedan estudiar, trabajar y sentir que sus derechos sociales están garantizados y se democratizan, sin

tensiones y coyunturas impuestas para afectar la vida en sociedad.

Que sea el Pueblo, libremente, el que decida, el que elija, el camino a seguir, en condiciones de respeto a nuestra soberanía. Que en todos los desafíos electorales por venir, la burguesía presente su propuesta de economía neoliberal y privatizaciones sin complejos. Que el pueblo la evalúe y la contraste con el proyecto socialista, sin injerencias, sin guerras inminentes, sin campañas de mentira y tergiversación. Como decía el Libertador: “Yo tengo pruebas irrefragables del tino del pueblo en las grandes resoluciones; y por eso es que siempre he preferido sus opiniones a las de los sabios”. Mientras la Revolución Bolivariana esté en el poder, el pueblo siempre tendrá la primera y la última palabra en la definición del camino y el destino de nuestra sociedad.

Hemos transitado procesos de diálogo político con la oposición en 2014, 16, 17-18 y ahora en 2019. Conversaciones que se han mantenido a pesar de la violencia política, de la injerencia protagónica de Washington en las continuas conspiraciones y de las reacciones del Estado ante la agresión. Para el entendimiento de frutos trascendentes, reales, las partes debemos comprender y tenemos que partir del carácter permanente, estructural, de

esta pugna a la que hemos hecho referencia y aportar a la construcción y protección de los mecanismos políticos necesarios para lograr acuerdos firmes en medio de diferencias, a veces irreconciliables. Quienes apuesten por un diálogo simplista y utilitario para ganancia de los agresores, o los que tienen intereses en la guerra, o en un proceso para remover un grupo del poder o negarle al otro el acceso, equivocan una vez más el rumbo y la estrategia, sin considerar las fuerzas profundas y las contradicciones radicales que han definido la evolución e interacción política en los últimos tiempos.

No es con una firma, una elección puntual o un acuerdo institucional parcial que se procesan diferencias tan determinantes y se garantiza la paz duradera. La solución puede incluir opciones y acuerdos como esos, pero no la definen, ni la restringen. Seamos capaces de ver mucho más allá. De elevar la jugada, de estar a la altura de la historia y del futuro. Hagamos política desde la realidad concreta, desde nuestras posiciones ideológicas, pero siempre teniendo como objetivo el desarrollo humano, la meta Bolivariana de la mayor suma de felicidad posible. La solución debe llevarnos a un mecanismo permanente y flexible de administración del conflicto histórico que nos ha marcado y nos marcará por décadas.

El Presidente Nicolás Maduro no se cansará de transitar los caminos del diálogo, pero no para tratar de superar un escollo coyuntural o circunstancia específica, sino para ampliar el horizonte de paz y de prosperidad a través del establecimiento de canales y métodos estables de diálogo social, político y económico, con los partidos de oposición, con la clase trabajadora, con el Poder Popular, con las fuerzas productivas. Acerquémonos para reconocernos, entendernos y respetarnos en nuestras diferencias y coincidencias. No le temamos a la contradicción que ha desatado los acontecimientos de nuestro propio devenir. No la ignoremos, no la subestimemos, ni la dejemos al margen. Entendámosla con coraje e inteligencia y aprendamos a administrar durante las próximas décadas este conflicto constitutivo, esta disputa omnipresente, que nos ha rigido con la sabiduría y la madurez que nos exigen el Pueblo de Venezuela, los Pueblos de Nuestra América, los Pueblos que luchan, resisten y tienen derecho a vivir en paz, en condiciones de libertad e igualdad. Es decir, tienen derecho a Vencer.

Desde: <http://mppre.gob.ve>

Sigue en Twitter: @jaarreaza

Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) Holds a very Successful Convention



By Azza Rojbi

From June 8-9, 2019, the Canadian Network on Cuba (CNC) held its 9th biennial convention in Toronto, Canada. Since its founding in 2002, the CNC has served as the umbrella group linking together Cuba solidarity groups across Canada.

This year's successful convention was marked by educational presentations by a variety of speakers, including Sandra Ramirez and Yamil Morrero from the North America Desk of the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP), spirited discussions, and most of all, the establishment of a clear plan of action for Cuba solidarity in Canada over the next two years.

One of the highlights of this year's convention was a talk given by the Cuban Ambassador to Canada, Her Excellency Josefina Vidal. Her powerful words focused on Cuba's popular vote to approve the new Constitution and the current state of U.S./Cuba relations, especially the U.S. Trump Administration's increasing attacks on Cuba and the tightening of the U.S. blockade through the implementation of the Title III of the Helms-Burton Act and other cruel measures.

Within this context of increasing aggression

against Cuba, by the government of the U.S. and also by the government of Canada, the convention concluded with a firm commitment to strengthening solidarity and friendship with Cuba across Canada in many different forms. Resolutions were passed establishing campaigns to: end the U.S. blockade on Cuba, including Title III of the Helms-Burton Act; demand that the government of Canada reinstate the Visa office for Cubans in Havana; and strengthen work with Parliamentarians in Canada, among others. Members groups also voted in favour of supporting important conferences coming up in the new year including the Hemispheric Anti-Imperialist Solidarity Conference for Democracy and Against Neo-Liberalism, from November 1-3, 2019 in Havana, Cuba and the 8th Vancouver International Che Guevara Conference, October 25-27th 2019 in Vancouver, Canada.

The Convention also

decided that the next two years will also focus on building the Che Guevara Volunteer Work Brigade in order to bring as many people from Canada to Cuba as possible to experience Cuba beyond the beautiful resorts and beaches.

This important program of action for Cuba solidarity in Canada will be led by the new CNC Executive and newly formed committees.

Starting in August, Fire This Time newspaper will begin to publish regularly about these campaigns and initiatives, so keep your eyes open for how to get involved in building solidarity and friendship with Cuba across Canada!



"Cuba moving Forward in 2019" forum featuring Cuban Ambassador Josefina Vidal as part of the CNC convention, June 8, 2019

On June 20, 2019, the US State Department added Cuba to the lowest tier in its 2019 Trafficking in Persons Report. The Report claims that "Cuba does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking and is not making significant efforts to do so."

This ranking has conceivably nothing to do with Cuba's true performance in actively combating human trafficking and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs absolutely rejects it for being a complete slander.

The US government has no moral or political authority to judge sovereign States or issue certificates of conduct. It is well known that this unilateral report, totally void of any international legitimacy or recognition, which is published every year by the US State Department, is simply a political and manipulative instrument used to exert pressure on other States, without any respect or consideration and in full disregard for international efforts to combat human

to justify the noticeable hostility of the US government against Cuba and the increasing unilateral blockade and economic coercion measures aimed at deteriorating the living standards of the population, restricting the country's financial inflows, hindering imports, hampering production processes and affecting social services. It is part of the ceaseless economic warfare that has been waged against Cuba during the last sixty years.

The United States is one of the countries facing the highest number of cases of trafficking in boys, girls and women in the world. Despite the fact that some US specialized sources, like the National Human Trafficking Resource Center based in Washington DC, estimate that trafficked persons in that country amount to hundreds of thousands, who are faced with a serious situation of associated labor exploitation, the authorities of that country have recognized that they can not even determine the real statistics of this scourge. That is to say, they have neither the means, the

features of trafficking in persons, during the period from May, 2017, to May, 2018.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs reminds the government of the United States that the relocation in third countries of the arrangements to be made by Cuban citizens to apply for a US visa, without any guarantees that the visa would be ultimately granted, increases considerably the cost of the process and the travels, thus placing many citizens in a vulnerable situation, in the face of criminal gangs devoted to trafficking in persons in other parts of the world.

The international scourge of trafficking in persons is, first and foremost, the result, in particular, of the rules of the game of capitalism, which conceive human beings as interchangeable goods, as if they were property, money or capital.

Havana - June 21, 2019

From: minrex.gob.cu

The United States has no authority to judge Cuba's performance against human trafficking



Statement by the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs

trafficking.

It deliberately ignores the exemplary and comprehensive work carried out by Cuba in the prevention and combat against this scourge. It overlooks the zero-tolerance policy implemented by our country against human trafficking and fails to refer to the results of the exchanges that, for five consecutive years, were held between both countries to share information and cooperate in these matters.

It rather omits the fact that the low incidence of trafficking in persons in Cuba is associated with its social achievements, public safety, equal opportunities and the policies and programs designed to empower women. The Report also ignores the fact that free access to health care, education, culture and sports contributes to reducing the country's vulnerability and strengthens its capability to increase international cooperation in this area.

Cuba has achieved world-renowned prestige in the implementation of the National Plan of Action to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Persons and Protect its Victims (2017-2020), something that the US performance in this field has failed to achieve.

As has been evidenced, the use of slanders and disparagement campaigns against Cuba, which overlap beyond control, is intended

capability nor the willingness to evaluate the problem, much less to solve it.

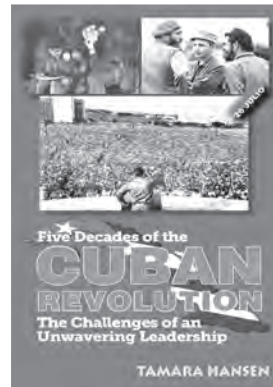
Equally well known is the fact that 85 per cent of legal proceedings filed for that reason in the US are cases of sexual exploitation; and that out of the one million children fleeing their homes, more than 300 000 are subject to some form of exploitation, according to the National Human Trafficking Resource Center itself.

The US State Department Report is also an onslaught against Cuba's international medical cooperation. It attempts to defame the legitimate South-South cooperation practiced by developing countries, which Cuba is part and proud of. That effort, that has been joined on a voluntary basis by hundreds of thousands of Cuban professionals for almost six decades, has had the merit of saving or contributing to save the life of millions of persons and alleviate the pain of several millions in more than 160 nations that, hadn't it been for that contribution, would have been faced with serious difficulties to have access to medical services.

Cuba will uphold its "Zero-Tolerance" policy against any form of human trafficking, as was evidenced by the 21 cases tried in Cuba for such crimes as "corruption of minors", "sale of and trafficking in children", and "procurement and trafficking in persons", with typical

Battle of Ideas Press

5 Decades of the Cuban Revolution The Challenges of an Unwavering Leadership



By Tamara Hansen

Coordinator of Vancouver Communities in Solidarity with Cuba (VCSC). She is also an editorial board member of The Fire This Time newspaper. She has travelled to Cuba over a dozen times and has written extensively on Cuban politics since 2003.

April 2010, paperback, \$10.00
314 pages, illustrated.

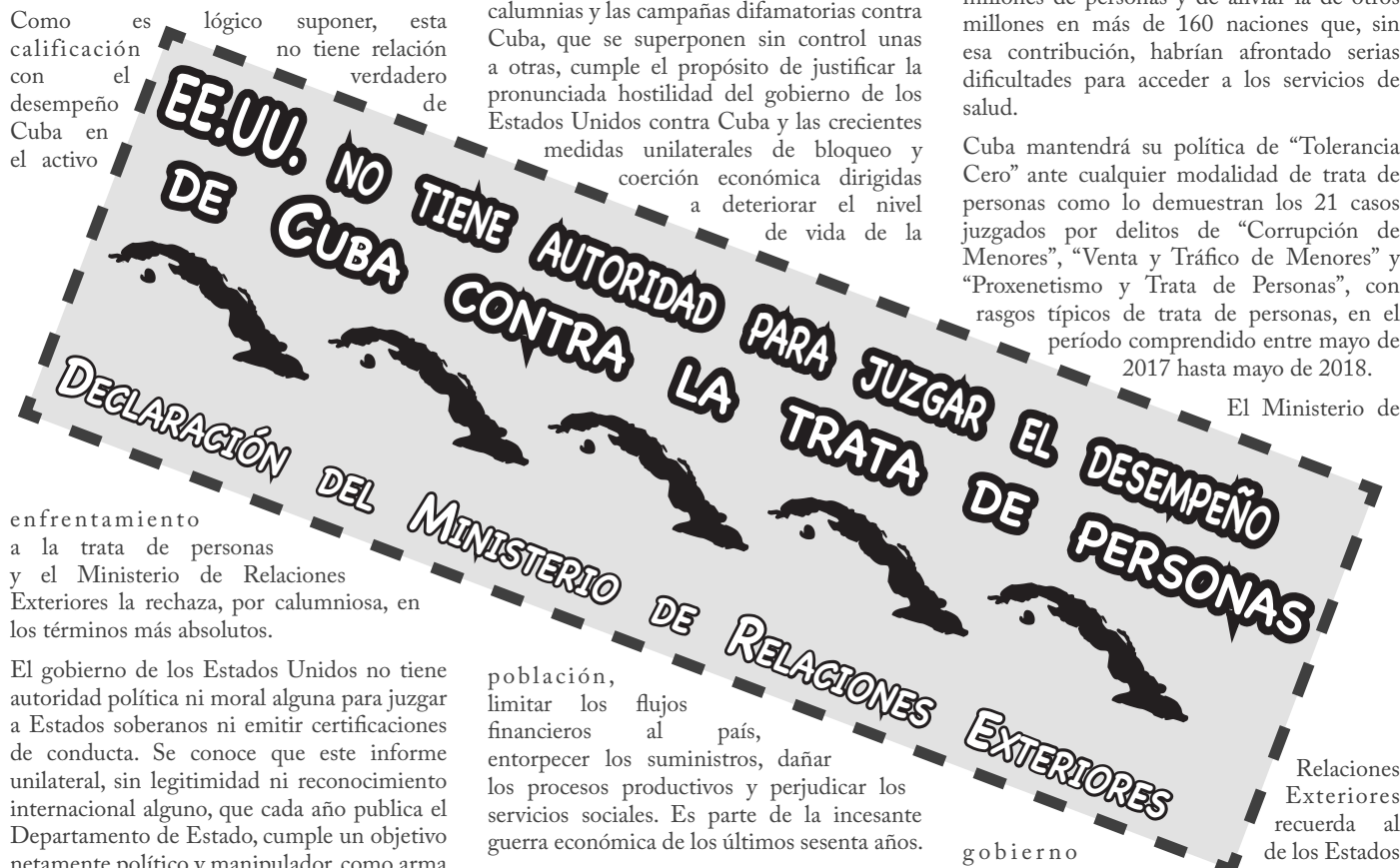
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* EN ESPAÑOL *

El 20 de junio de 2019, el Departamento de Estado de los Estados Unidos incluyó a Cuba en la peor de las categorías de su Informe sobre la Trata de Personas 2019. El informe alega que Cuba “no cumple completamente con los estándares mínimos para la eliminación de la trata de personas y no hace esfuerzos significativos con ese fin”.

Como es lógico suponer, esta calificación no tiene relación con el verdadero desempeño de Cuba en el activo



enfrentamiento a la trata de personas y el Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores la rechaza, por calumniosa, en los términos más absolutos.

El gobierno de los Estados Unidos no tiene autoridad política ni moral alguna para juzgar a Estados soberanos ni emitir certificaciones de conducta. Se conoce que este informe unilateral, sin legitimidad ni reconocimiento internacional alguno, que cada año publica el Departamento de Estado, cumple un objetivo netamente político y manipulador, como arma de presión contra otros Estados y sin respeto, consideración o apego en lo absoluto a los esfuerzos internacionales por combatir la trata de personas.

Desconoce deliberadamente el trabajo ejemplar e integral de Cuba en la prevención, enfrentamiento y respuesta a este flagelo; pasa por alto la política de tolerancia cero de nuestro país frente a la trata, y oculta el resultado de los intercambios que durante 5 años consecutivos se celebraron entre ambos países para compartir información y cooperar en estos temas.

Prefiere omitir que la baja incidencia de la trata de personas en Cuba está asociada a los logros sociales y de seguridad ciudadana, a la igualdad de oportunidades, y a las políticas y programas destinados al empoderamiento de la mujer; como ignora el hecho de que el acceso gratuito a los servicios de salud, a

la educación, la cultura y el deporte, reduce la vulnerabilidad del país y fortalece su capacidad para incrementar la cooperación internacional en esta esfera.

Cuba ha alcanzado un reconocido prestigio internacional en la ejecución del Plan de Acción Nacional para la Prevención y Enfrentamiento a la Trata de Personas y la Protección a las Víctimas (2017-2020), algo que la ejecutoria de los Estados Unidos en la materia no alcanza.

Como se viene demostrando, el uso de las calumnias y las campañas difamatorias contra Cuba, que se superponen sin control unas a otras, cumple el propósito de justificar la pronunciada hostilidad del gobierno de los Estados Unidos contra Cuba y las crecientes medidas unilaterales de bloqueo y coerción económica dirigidas a deteriorar el nivel de vida de la

población, limitar los flujos financieros al país, entorpecer los suministros, dañar los procesos productivos y perjudicar los servicios sociales. Es parte de la incesante guerra económica de los últimos sesenta años.

Los Estados Unidos son uno de los países con mayores problemas de trata de niños, niñas y mujeres en el mundo. A pesar de que fuentes especializadas estadounidenses, como el Centro Nacional de Investigaciones sobre Trata de Personas, con sede en Washington D.C., estiman en cientos de miles las personas traficadas en ese país, con una grave situación de explotación laboral asociada, sus autoridades han reconocido que no pueden determinar siquiera la estadística real de este flagelo; o sea, no poseen los medios, la capacidad o la voluntad para apreciar el problema y, mucho menos, para resolverlo.

Es conocido que el 85 por ciento de los procesos legales que se entablan por ese motivo en los Estados Unidos se corresponden a casos de explotación sexual, y que del millón de niños que abandonan sus hogares, más de 300 mil están sujetos a alguna forma de explotación, según el propio Centro Nacional

de Investigaciones sobre Trata de Personas.

El informe del Departamento de Estado arremete también contra la cooperación médica internacional de Cuba. Pretende difamar contra la legítima cooperación Sur-Sur que practican los países en desarrollo, de la cual Cuba forma parte y de la que se enorgullece. Ese esfuerzo, en el que, bajo principios de voluntariedad, han participado cientos de miles de profesionales cubanos durante casi seis décadas, ha tenido el mérito de salvar o contribuir a salvar la vida de millones de personas y de aliviar la de otros millones en más de 160 naciones que, sin esa contribución, habrían afrontado serias dificultades para acceder a los servicios de salud.

Cuba mantendrá su política de “Tolerancia Cero” ante cualquier modalidad de trata de personas como lo demuestran los 21 casos juzgados por delitos de “Corrupción de Menores”, “Venta y Tráfico de Menores” y “Proxenetismo y Trata de Personas”, con rasgos típicos de trata de personas, en el período comprendido entre mayo de 2017 hasta mayo de 2018.

El Ministerio de

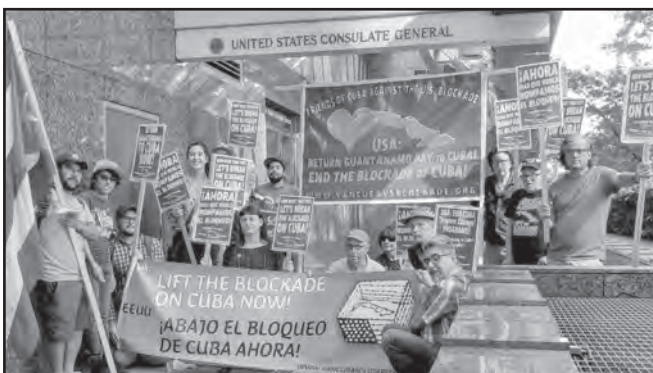
Relaciones Exteriores recuerda al gobierno de los Estados Unidos que el traslado a terceros países de los trámites para obtener la visa estadounidense por parte de ciudadanos cubanos, sin garantías de otorgamiento, además de encarecerlos considerablemente, así como los viajes, coloca a muchos ciudadanos en situación de vulnerabilidad frente a las bandas criminales que se dedican a la trata de personas en otras partes del mundo.

El flagelo internacional de la trata de personas es, ante todo, resultado fundamentalmente de las reglas de juego del capitalismo, que conciben al ser humano como una mercancía, intercambiable como los bienes, el dinero o el capital.

La Habana - 21 de junio de 2019.

Desde: minrex.gob.cu

LIFT THE BLOCKADE ON CUBA NOW! CUBA VS. BLOQUEO



By Janine Solanki

On June 4, 2019, the U.S. government banned U.S. cruise ships from travelling to Cuba and announced further restrictions on U.S. citizens trying to visit the island. This comes one month after the unprecedented and controversial activation of "Title III" of the Helms-Burton Act and is yet another unprovoked attack by the Trump administration against the Cuban people.

"The tightening of the U.S. blockade against Cuba and its extraterritorial implementation is an attack on International Law and the sovereignty of all States. It is the main obstacle to our development and a flagrant violation of the human rights of all Cubans," Cuban Minister of Foreign Affairs Bruno Rodríguez Parrilla said in a tweet in response to this new aggression by the U.S. government.

Here in Canada, the Trudeau government is also taking unprecedented steps against the Cuban people. On May 8 the government of Canada announced that its embassy in Havana will no longer process applications for visitor and residence visas, or work and study permits. This has been met with protest from Cuba solidarity activists and Cuban-Canadian families alike. This measure is keeping families apart and stops Cuban musicians, artists, professors, students, and athletes from travelling to Canada without great difficulty.

June 17 Picket Action

Friends of Cuba Against the U.S. Blockade – Vancouver held a monthly action in front of the U.S. Consulate in downtown Vancouver. Cuba solidarity activists here in Vancouver, as well as in Ottawa and Montreal, Canada and Kiev, Ukraine, join in a coordinated action on the 17th of every month, rain, shine or snow to demand an end to the criminal U.S. blockade. Protesters held up picket signs reading "Lift the U.S. Blockade on Cuba Now!" and "Return Guantanamo to Cuba Now!" while picketing in front of the U.S. Consulate, chanting for the U.S. officials above to hear. Protesters gathered to hear from speakers between rounds of picketing, which included a voice message of solidarity from Ottawa Cuba Connections who were also protesting in front of the U.S. Embassy. To wrap up the action protesters held picket signs, banners and Cuban flags in defiance under the building sign of the United States Consulate General, and shared a photo of this on social media around the world!

Cuba solidarity activists are standing firmly with Cuba to demand that Cuba's sovereignty and self-determination be respected, without blockades, occupied territory like Guantanamo, and regime change programs that the U.S. government uses against Cuba. Vancouver activists together with friends of Cuba in Ottawa and Montreal, Canada, and Kiev, Ukraine will continue to unite to demand an end to the unjust U.S. blockade against Cuba and invite you to get involved! Find out more at www.vancubavsblockade.org or on Facebook and Twitter @NoBloqueoVan

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